

The

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# Internationalist



## Sink U.S. Imperialism in the Quicksands of the Near East!



Lynsey Addario/New York Times

Burial in Falluja, Iraq, July 1.

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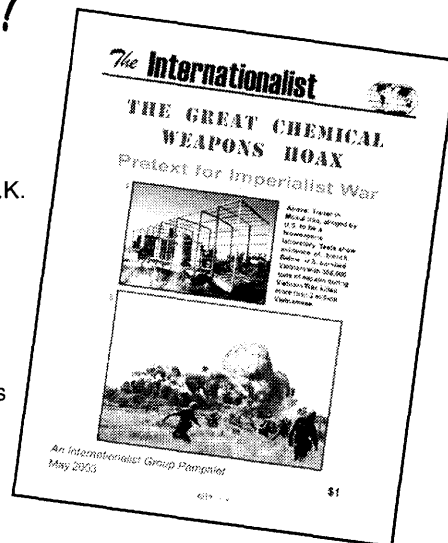
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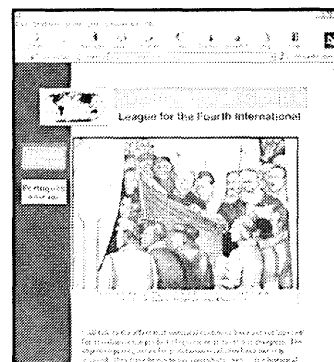
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## The Internationalist



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No. 17



October-November 2003



**Drive the Imperialists Out of Iraq, Afghanistan!  
Drive the Zionists Out of the West Bank, Gaza!**

## **Sink U.S. Imperialism in the Quicksands of the Near East!**

NOVEMBER 5—The imperialist occupiers of Iraq are taking a pounding lately, and that is a very good thing for the vast mass of humanity. Ten Katyusha rockets slammed into the Al-Rashid Hotel October 26, followed the next day by nearly simultaneous car bombs hitting four police stations (and the Red Cross headquarters). As roadside bombs took out an Abrams tank, a Blackhawk helicopter was brought down by a rocket-propelled grenade, sending the “post-war” death toll among U.S. troops above the total dead in the March-April invasion. Then came the weekend of November 2-3, in which 20 occupation troops were killed, most of them in a Chinook helicopter that was hit by a surface-to-air missile. It was the bloodiest day for the invaders since their March 23 debacle at Nasiriya. And as U.S. casualties mount (400 dead and several thousand wounded), so does discontent on the “home front” over the “war without end” launched by Washington. Of course, there is no mention in the media of the more than 15,000 *Iraqis* slaughtered during the U.S./British invasion and the thousands killed since then.

The Bush White House and its proconsul (as the Roman empire used to call its colonial governors) in Baghdad, Paul Bremer III, try to brush it all off as the work of mercenaries, Al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist fanatics and “dead-enders” left over from the Baath Party regime of Iraqi nationalist strongman Saddam Hussein. For Washington, it has to be foreigners or Baathists, for the Iraqis were supposed to have “greeted” the “coalition” armies. Not only has no evidence been presented of an onslaught of “foreigners” (other than the 146,000 U.S. troops and 20,000 “allies”), not only do U.S. commanders on the spot dismiss this fantasy, it is clear to all that the resistance has massive support from the population. There are no jungles to hide in, yet the resisters are able to operate with impunity. No one dares betray them, and not because they fear the eventual return of Saddam, but because their neighbors would lynch them then and there. *Every blow struck by the Iraqi people against their bloody U.S. colonial masters and the occupation armies is a blow on behalf of the exploited and oppressed of the world.*

The invasion and colonial occupation of Afghanistan and now Iraq have nothing to do with a “war on terror,” except that this is the current pretext being used by U.S. imperialism for its wars of aggression. (Under Democrat Clinton, the United States



Faleh Kheiber/Reuters

**Demonstration by former Iraqi soldiers in Baghdad, June 17. U.S. soldiers shot point-blank into the crowd, killing two.**

twice waged war on Yugoslavia, in 1995 and 1999, and invaded Haiti, all in the name of “human rights.”) The takeover of Iraq had nothing to do with finding “weapons of mass destruction”: every U.S. and U.N. agency knew there were none in Iraq, and plenty in the Pentagon arsenal. (In fact, if Saddam Hussein did have “WMDs” the U.S. would have been far less eager to invade. And in any case, communists uphold the right of semi-colonial Iraq to have any kind of weapons it could get its hands on to defend itself against imperialism.) The war on the country with the world’s second-largest petroleum reserves did have a lot to do with oil: not that the United States needed to import Iraqi oil, but U.S. rulers want *control* over the supply of this vital commodity to their imperialist allies and rivals. And the war had everything to do with American imperialism’s drive to nail down its global hegemony as the “sole superpower” for years to come.

From the outset, the Republican government of Texas energy company executives, military contractors and Zionist war hawks with George W. Bush as its titular head has had a singular focus on grabbing Iraq. The movers and shakers in this administration are determined to “remake the map” of the Near East, calculating that by using U.S. military and technological prowess they could “shock and awe” local potentates and regional populations into submission. Yet the plans to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and the blueprints for the

the terrorist “war on terror” were drawn up by the Democratic government of Wall Street execs, Hollywood money men and NATO war hawks under Bill Clinton. The wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, like those on Yugoslavia, were voted for by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The U.S. has a “bi-partisan” imperialist foreign policy today as it did during the anti-Soviet Cold War, and their differences are at most tactical. ***Impotent anti-war marches pushing for a more liberal foreign policy will not put an end to this “war without end.” What’s needed is international socialist revolution to sweep away the imperialist system of war, poverty and racism.***

And it’s urgently needed before the capitalist-imperialist warmongers manage to set off a global conflagration. The League for the Fourth International has repeatedly warned that the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq are preparing the way for an inter-imperialist World War III, much as the 1908-13 Balkan Wars set the stage for World War I and the fighting in Spain, Ethiopia and China led up to World War II. Only this war would be fought with real, not mythical, “weapons of mass destruction” in the hands of those who actually have them – the imperialists. The U.S.’ ultimate target in the second Iraq war (as well as the first) was not a tinpot dictator and former American toady in Baghdad, but the rival European imperialists in Paris and Berlin. For their part, the European governments that demurred at Washington’s war drive did so not because they oppose imperialist war (look at Yugoslavia) but because they wanted to get a measure of control and a share of the spoils. Now that Bush is asking for money and troops, the U.N. Security Council unanimously voted a resolution authorizing a U.S.-led “multinational” occupation force and endorsing Washington’s hand-picked Iraqi puppet “governing council.”

Meanwhile, the kill-crazed Zionists led by Ariel Sharon, the infamous butcher of Sabra and Shatila, are gearing up to drive tens and possibly hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their West Bank and Gaza homes in a mammoth “ethnic cleansing” that they euphemistically call “transfer.” They are pushing ahead with construction of a wall penetrating deep into Palestinian lands on the West Bank, in order to annex those areas to Israel. They are killing off Palestinian leaders and brazenly preparing to assassinate Yasir Arafat. They are perfectly capable of plunging the world into a thermonuclear holocaust, and in fact were preparing to do so in the 1973 war when Israeli premier Golda Meir ordered atomic weapons moved to airfields for loading on planes to be dropped on Arab capitals. Yet, just as the U.S. is floundering about in Iraq, unable to dominate the country with the expeditionary force on hand and unable to get more troops, the Zionists’ provocations could blow up in their faces. The second Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) has been going on for more than three years as the desperate Arab population of the Occupied Territories feels they have nothing to lose. A full-scale attack on Syria or mass expulsion of Palestinians could trigger an explosion of popular unrest throughout the region.

Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld borrowed his Blitzkrieg tactics, indiscriminate aerial bombing and plans for burning Baghdad from the German Nazis. Now U.S. military planners are watching films like the *Battle of Algiers* to glean tips from

the French about how to wage a colonial “dirty war.” They believe they have learned the lessons of Vietnam, and scoff at the idea of a “quagmire” in the Near East. Yet in all their voluminous contingency plans, they didn’t prepare for guerrilla insurgency with mass popular support. That is what they now have on their blood-soaked hands in Iraq, while Taliban forces continue to harass occupation troops in Afghanistan. The image of invincibility projected by the U.S. is ultimately an illusion intended to intimidate. To be sure, the Yankee imperialists have great military and economic strengths, but their great weakness is that this all rests on a working class that they ruthlessly exploit and use as “cannon fodder” for their wars. Their wage slaves and gladiators could rebel instead of saluting their oppressors as they are about to die.

### **Imperialist War on Iraq = Capitalist War on Workers and Oppressed**

The strutting American imperialists thought, like the British colonialists of the 19th century, that a “whiff of the grapeshot” would be enough to put an end to military resistance in Iraq. Richard Perle, one of the architects of the attack on Iraq, told PBS’ program *Wide Angle* (11 July 2002): “Support for Saddam, including within his military organization, will collapse at the first whiff of gunpowder. Now, it isn’t going to be over in 24 hours, but it isn’t going to be months either.” Well, it has been months, and attacks are intensifying. In fact, there was considerable resistance almost from the beginning of the invasion. There was no rout of the Iraqi army, which just melted away only to give rise to guerrilla skirmishes. But opposition to the invaders is not just military. Mass demonstrations of tens of thousands of Iraqis against the U.S./British occupation have taken place not only in the “Sunni triangle” but repeatedly in the capital Baghdad, in the Shiite religious center Najaf and in cities throughout central and southern Iraq, as well as in Mosul and Kirkuk, the major cities in the north. Moreover, there are now reports of a revival of workers’ struggles including armed pickets successfully resisting an attempt to shut down a brick factory.

The Washington war hawks and their mouthpieces keep trying to put a positive spin on everything. Paul Wolfowitz (known in Washington as “Wolfowitz of Arabia”) took along a planeload of journalists for a happy-face tour to show off “progress.” Instead he just missed getting hit by rockets in the most secure zone in Iraq’s capital. After the Al-Rashid hotel attack, “Baghdad Bob” Bremer remarked that “we’re going to have good days and bad days,” but “fortunately, the good days do outnumber the bad days” (*Los Angeles Times*, 27 October). It has an eerie feeling of the “light at the end of the tunnel” that General Westmoreland claimed to see in Vietnam. “It can’t be fun being occupied,” quipped Bremer. And then came the incident of “Chinook down” near Falluja, the epicenter of Iraqi armed resistance. Reporters who rushed to the scene found peasants cheering. An American captain stationed in Falluja earlier told British journalist Robert Fisk that many of the attacks were carried out by “local freedom fighters” (*Independent*, 24 October).

This widespread opposition has greatly demoralized the occupation troops, who expected to be greeted with flowers and



hugs and instead are getting blasted with RPGs and SAMs and homemade bombs. The Pentagon-funded Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* reported that in a survey of almost 2,000 soldiers in all parts of Iraq, 49 percent described morale in their units as "low." When a first group of soldiers were given two weeks leave for rest and recreation in the U.S., 30 of them went absent without leave (*Washington Post*, 21 October). The GI Rights Hotline reported that calls from soldiers inquiring about going AWOL have gone up by 75 percent, and a court affidavit referred to 50 soldiers deserting. Others desperate to get out of Iraq tell counselors they plan to shoot themselves in the foot in order to get sent back, and the "in-country" suicide rate is reportedly far higher than it was in Vietnam (the Pentagon won't release figures). In this "volunteer" army, commanders are concerned that fully half of soldiers surveyed in Iraq say they definitely won't reenlist. And *ABC-TV News* (16 July) reported:

"The sergeant at the 2nd Battle Combat Team Headquarters pulled me aside in the corridor. 'I've got my own 'Most Wanted' list,' he told me. He was referring to the deck of cards the U.S. government published, featuring Saddam Hussein, his sons and other wanted members of the former Iraqi regime.

"The aces in my deck are Paul Bremer, Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush and Paul Wolfowitz,' he said."

Meanwhile, reports filter out of soldiers' family members fuming as tours in Iraq were suddenly extended. "Frustrations became so bad recently at Fort Stewart, Ga., that a colonel, meeting with 800 seething spouses, most of them wives, had to be escorted from the session. 'They were crying, cussing, yelling and screaming for their men to come back,' said Lucia Braxton, director of community services at Fort Stewart," reported the *New York Times* (July 4). Increasingly, anger is turning to protest as soldiers' family members participate in anti-war marches. Among the general population, opinion surveys report that half now disapprove of Bush's handling of the Iraq occupation. Discontent is so rife that Democratic presidential candidates (the "nine dwarves") are competing over who is the real "peace" candidate. Vermont governor Howard Dean, Ohio congressman Denis Kucinich, former Illinois senator Carol Moseley Brown and New York's Al Sharpton have now been joined by General Wesley Clark, who commanded the 1999 war on Serbia under Clinton.

But none of this deters the Bush gang in the White House and their allies, who are bent on "bringing the war home" by launching a full-scale assault on workers, women, minorities and immigrants, targeting a broad range of rights for annihilation. Employers across the country are trying to foist health insurance costs onto the backs of their employees. This week, Congress voted and the president signed the first law banning forms of abortion since the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalized a woman's right to terminate unwanted pregnancies. The week before, the Homeland Security Agency staged a nationwide raid against Wal-Mart stores that picked up 250 undocumented immigrant maintenance workers. In July, poor black residents of Benton Harbor, Michigan found their community occupied by police armored personnel carriers. Now Congress is preparing to use the bait of prescription drug coverage to begin

dismantling Medicaid. And above all the war is a battering ram for the assault on democratic rights under the U.S.A. Patriot Act, Homeland Security Act and other police-state measures.

Thus the fight against the war on Iraq is intimately linked to the fight for free abortion on demand; for free high-quality medical care for all; for full citizenship rights for all immigrants; for mobilizing the power of the working class to defend embattled black ghettos, Latino barrios and Asian neighborhoods from racist attack; and to defending democratic and workers rights against assault. This can only be accomplished by leading these struggles to their necessary conclusion: socialist revolution.

### **Not "Social-Patriotism" But Internationalist Class War Against Imperialist War**

*As we have said from the outset, the imperialist war on Iraq and Afghanistan is at the same time a capitalist war on working people and the oppressed "at home."* Looking to the capitalist Democratic Party is a recipe for defeat. The very fact that a certified war criminal like General Clark (who ordered the bombing of a maternity hospital in Belgrade, had his planes shoot up Serbian refugee buses and trains, and presided over the "cleansing" of Serbs from Kosovo) could pass himself off as a "peace" candidate speaks volumes. Or that the reputed "progressive" Dean appeals to Southern racists with Confederate flags of slavery and KKK terror on their pick-ups. The bosses' war "at home" and abroad must be *defeated* by sharp class struggle, by *class war against imperialist war*. Defeats for the imperialists benefit the struggles of the oppressed around the globe. The death penalty was put on hold in 1972 and abortion was legalized in the U.S. in 1973 as a result of mass protests and the U.S.' defeat on the battlefield in Vietnam. South African blacks fighting apartheid, and Angola's successful fight (with Cuban aid) against a South African invasion in 1976, were greatly aided by the imperialist losses in Indochina.

By the same token, victories for imperialism encourage the labor haters and race baiters to "roll back" social gains won in the past. There is broad awareness of this as opposition to the war on Iraq has spread in the workers movement. Dozens of union locals, city and county labor councils and state labor federations have passed antiwar resolutions. But this opposition is hamstrung by the labor bureaucracy whose job is to keep the unions chained to capitalism. Thus at an October 24-25 conference of U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW) the keynote speaker spoke of "confronting these cowboys, these terminators for global capitalism," by which he meant the Bush administration, and at the same time he objected to "the manner in which the term 'patriotism' is used in the USA by corporate elites and the political Right." The meeting adopted a USLAW "mission statement" which calls for "A Just Foreign Policy," "Redirecting the Nation's Resources from inflated military spending to meeting the needs of working families," and "Supporting Our Troops and their Families by bringing the troops home now."

This is the program of "social-patriotism" in unadulterated form, a program of class collaboration. For the social patriots, it is all a matter of policies and priorities, of "guns vs.

butter,” of posing as the true U.S. patriots as opposed to the “corporate elite” and their right-wing allies who “are patriotic only to the U.S. dollar.” But the fight against the imperialist wars and colonial rule of Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia cannot be a squabble over “jobs not bombs,” “education instead of occupation,” it must be a fight against the capitalist system itself, which in its decay has unleashed a steady string of wars over the past century. U.S. rulers know that their continued domination requires a state of permanent war, which is why the twin capitalist parties have desperately sought to overcome the “Vietnam syndrome” (fear of a *losing* imperialist-colonialist war) and to regiment the population. With their forces stretched thin across the Near East, they are considering bringing back the draft (military conscription), and are already trying to do so through the back door by aggressive recruitment of poor and minority youth.

As Lenin and Trotsky fought in the first imperialist world war against the pacifist illusions fostered by the social-patriots of their day, *communists today fight against social patriotism with a program of revolutionary defeatism toward the imperialists and revolutionary defensism of their intended victims.* Trotskyists defend Iraq, Afghanistan and all semi-colonial countries against the new colonizers; we defend the bureaucratically deformed workers states of North Korea, China, Cuba and Vietnam against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, while fighting to oust the bureaucracy that endangers the remaining revolutionary gains in illusory hopes of “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists. This is the program of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International. It is *not* the program of a host of pseudo-socialist outfits, which each in their own way lead or tail after the class-collaborationist peace movement.

The most shameless purveyors of “social-patriotism” are the reformist outfits that organize the various antiwar popular fronts, notably the Stalinoid Workers World Party (ANSWER), social-democratic International Socialist Organization (Campus Antiwar Network) and Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (Not In Our Name), and of course the granddaddy of them all, the stars-and-stripes Communist Party U.S.A. Over the last year there has been a good deal of squabbling in the “antiwar movement,” but on October 25 ANSWER joined with the liberal United for Peace & Justice to sponsor marches in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco. While they were somewhat larger than in the past (perhaps 25,000 in Washington), politically they were sounding boards for Democratic “doves,” notably Sharpton and Kucinich (the “clean for Dean” people prefer to keep their distance, concentrating on raising big bucks on the Internet). The head of the Washington march was a joint ANSWER/UFPJ banner “End the Occupation of Iraq, Bring the Troops Home.” With their liberal politics, they and outfits like USLAW periodically call antiwar protesters into the streets so they can vote Democratic in the 2004 elections.

### SL and SWP: “Out Now” Opportunists

Slightly to the left of the open popular-frontists are groups which proclaim themselves communist and talk of the working class, but whose line is only a variant of “bring the troops home” politics of the “mainstream” peace coalitions. Notable among

these groups are the Socialist Workers Party and the Spartacist League. As U.S. casualties mount along with growing Iraqi resistance to U.S. colonial occupation, some sectors of the ruling class (particularly liberal Democrats) are beginning to call for U.S. forces to leave before Iraq turns into a “new Vietnam.” This situation underlines the difference between the Internationalist Group’s Leninist call for the imperialist occupiers to be driven out and defeated, and the positions put forward by the bulk of the left. In particular, it highlights the political implications of the SL’s refusal to call for *defeat* of the U.S. imperialists in Iraq, and its polemics against the IG for raising this call.

Today, the headlines in the SL’s newspaper *Workers Vanguard* feature the call for the U.S. to get “Troops Out Now.” This demand is addressed to the U.S. rulers, rather than to the world’s workers and semi-colonial peoples and it echoes the sentiment of increasingly vocal sectors of the bourgeoisie. We have pointed out that it echoes the central slogan (“Out Now”) on which the reformist SWP built “antiwar” popular fronts like the National Peace Action Coalition during the Vietnam War. SL members continually defend their organization’s abandonment of the call to defeat their “own” bourgeoisie by arguing that Iraq does not have the military means to defeat the U.S. imperialists, and claiming that we say the Iraqis can do so on their own. In the months following Bush’s proclamation of victory, SL members have sneeringly asked us, “So where’s your big Iraqi fight-back now?”

As we have stressed, the fight to defeat the imperialist invaders and occupiers is not a struggle of the Iraqi people alone, but of the working class around the world. The efforts of the Iraqis themselves are a crucial part of this fight. We noted as well that by pretending to reduce the issue to a military/technical one, the SL willfully obscures the position of Lenin, who for example called for the defeat of French imperialism, which was armed to the teeth, by Morocco, a small North African country far poorer and militarily weaker than Iraq. With Iraqi resistance growing, what does it mean if supposed revolutionaries repeatedly tell the Iraqi people that defeating the marauding U.S. colonialists is impossible? This is a classic example of a once-revolutionary organization giving in to the ideological pressure of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

*The colonial occupation must be defeated. The imperialists must be driven out of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Zionists must be driven out of the West Bank and Gaza.* The valiant efforts of the Iraqi and Palestinian masses are a vital part of this struggle; their resistance can wear down the occupiers and inflict losses, but they cannot succeed on their own in winning liberation. Working people throughout the world must be mobilized on an *internationalist* basis in struggle against their common enemy. The decisive blows will be delivered by a class-conscious working class in the imperialist countries which goes beyond resistance and rebellion to take aim at the capitalist system itself. That requires above all a break from the bourgeois and reformist parties, as well as breaking the hold of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy that keeps the masses politically chained to their exploiters and oppressors. It requires above all building a revolutionary workers party on the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky. ■



## No Vote for Any of the Capitalist Candidates for Governor – Democrats, Republicans or Greens!

# California Recall Follies and the Bankruptcy of U.S. Bourgeois Politics

**Reformist SWP and SEP No Answer –  
Fight in the Unions, Ghettos and Barrios to  
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

*In the October 7 California recall-election, Democratic governor Gray Davis was voted out by a 55-45 margin. Republican candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger replaced him with 49 percent of the ballots.*

For the past several weeks, California has been roiled by the October 7 recall referendum on removing Democratic governor Gray Davis, and a simultaneous vote on his successor, in case he is defeated. The ballot initiative was launched by Republican right-wing Congressman and millionaire businessman Darrell Issa, and the leading candidate to succeed Davis is Republican movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Republicans want to use the recall vote as a launching pad for an offensive against the Democrats in the 2004 presidential elections, and have been pouring millions of dollars into the battle. The Democrats, in turn, see the recall as a Republican power grab and “constitutional coup,” following up on the 2000 election which was decided by the Supreme Court, and have been mobilizing Hollywood money and union phone banks to defeat it.

The Internationalist Group fights for proletarian opposition to all capitalist candidates and parties. *We call for abstention on the recall section of the October 7 ballot and no vote for any of the 135 candidates running to replace Davis.* The working people and oppressed have no side in this cynical charade. The power-hungry chauvinist Schwarzenegger, who once declared he “admired” Hitler’s ability to work a crowd into a frenzy and (according to testimony of the victims) has repeatedly sexually harassed women, is clearly an enemy of the workers, immigrants, blacks, Latinos and Asians. But so is “Governor Cutback” Davis. The Democrats pretend that the state’s ills – first and foremost a \$38 billion budget deficit – are due to the Bush regime in Washington, the economy, whatever. But every Californian remembers how as the energy corporations were jacking up electricity prices by “megawatt laundering,” engineering shortages and black-outs in 2000 and 2001, Davis signed extortionate contracts for \$43 billion and forked over another \$13 billion for “emergency” purchases from Enron, Calpine, Dynegy and the rest of the energy cartel leeches. And his response to the budget gap has been to order billion-dollar education cutbacks, tuition hikes and prepare tens of thousands of layoffs.

*Against the phony “alternatives” and lesser-evilmism of bourgeois politics, we fight to mobilize the proletariat and*



**Schwarzenegger wants to give California the Iraq treatment. Above: in Baghdad on July 4 for the opening of *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*.**

*the oppressed in their own class interests, to build a revolutionary workers party.*

A particular target of the recall drive has been California’s huge population of immigrants. The leering muscle-bound “Terminator” Schwarzenegger is a member of the board of U.S. English, the racist outfit which seeks to impose “English only” in education, voting, government services and every aspect of society. He supported Proposition 187 in 1994, which ordered the denial of government services to “illegal” immigrants in California; Prop 209, which outlawed affirmative action for oppressed minorities in public education (notably the University of California); and Prop 227, which eliminated most bilingual education. In order to win the Latino vote, Davis approved a recent measure allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain California driver’s licenses. But while this can be a positive step (which Davis vetoed a year ago), reactionary forces want to use it to build a data base of immigrants for pick-up and deportation. Moreover, Davis has vetoed bills for educational outreach services in minority neighborhoods on the grounds that it violated Prop 209, and he sought to conciliate the racist backers of Prop 187. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, the Democrats’ candidate if Davis is ousted, is notorious for using a racist slur against blacks at a Black His-

tory Month meeting of trade unionists.

Schwarzenegger, who reportedly has been caught on film imitating Hitler and giving the stiff-arm Nazi salute (where are these outtakes and photos?) while clicking his heels like an SS soldiers, is "gung ho" for a militaristic U.S. foreign policy. The Democrats, who mostly voted for the war on Iraq and almost unanimously for the war on Afghanistan, are now trying to squeeze votes from unease over the occupation. Yet in the U.S.' terrorist "war on terror," Davis and the Democrats have sought to outflank the Republicans *on the right*. The governor not only shut down the Golden Gate Bridge with great fanfare in order to grab some "anti-terrorist" headlines, he set up the California Anti-Terrorist Information Center (CATIC). This reborn "red squad" got behind closed doors with Oakland Democratic mayor (and former California governor) Jerry Brown to launch the April 7 police attack in the Port of Oakland, where shotgun-wielding cops fired supposedly "non-lethal" ammunition at antiwar protesters and longshoremen. Now a number of unionists and demonstrators are being tried by the Democratic district attorney on frame-up charges resulting from this brutal cop assault. Meanwhile, nationally Democratic senators are calling to militarize the docks, police-state measures which will be used in an attempt to break waterside and maritime unions.

The California AFL-CIO bureaucracy has gone all out to defeat the recall, as always by supporting the Democrats. Yet the Gray Davis supported by these labor fakers is the same Davis who has sent out layoff notices to more than 12,000 state workers, slashed government services, imposed higher tuition on community and state colleges, etc. The recall would never have taken off without massive revulsion against Davis among Democratic voters. A nursing student at Southwest Los Angeles Community College told reporters, "He's behind all the budget cuts at this school." *You can't defeat immigrant bashing and racism by supporting Davis and Bustamante, the candidates of the capitalist Democratic Party of racism and war.* Class-conscious

workers and supporters of black and immigrant rights must demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* and fight attacks on affirmative action by demanding *open admissions*, full equality in employment and education, with special programs to facilitate access by oppressed minorities who have been targeted and excluded by centuries of discrimination.

Self-proclaimed socialist groups have taken a variety of positions on the California recall-election. The ultra-reformist Communist Party U.S.A. (CP), as usual, supports whatever the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy is pushing, namely support for the Democrats – calling to vote no on the recall and for Bustamante ("Grass Roots Mobilizes to Defeat Recall," *People's Weekly World*, 4 October). Spokesmen of the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO) have called to vote no on the recall (*Socialist Worker*, 1 August), while the ISO leadership says it would "have no hesitation about endorsing" Green Party candidate Peter Camejo, if he runs a "serious campaign" (*International Socialist Review*, September-October 2003). In the 2000 presidential election the ISO were cheerleaders for Ralph Nader of the bourgeois Greens, a minor capitalist party, and in the past they have backed the "progressive" stock broker Camejo, who is a former "socialist" presidential candidate and former fund manager for Merrill Lynch. Today Camejo says he would "understand" if his supporters voted for Democrat Bustamante. As opposed to the CP and ISO reformists who regularly vote for the political representatives of the bourgeoisie, genuine communists oppose voting for any capitalist candidate or party. *No support to the red-white-and-blue Greens!*

Two self-proclaimed socialists are on the ballot in the California recall-election, Joel Britton of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and John Christopher Burton of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), running as independents on barely distinguishable platforms. These parties, which are sometimes erroneously called Trotskyist (the SWP officially repudiated Trotsky as "ultraleftist" two decades ago, and the SEP has a dubious

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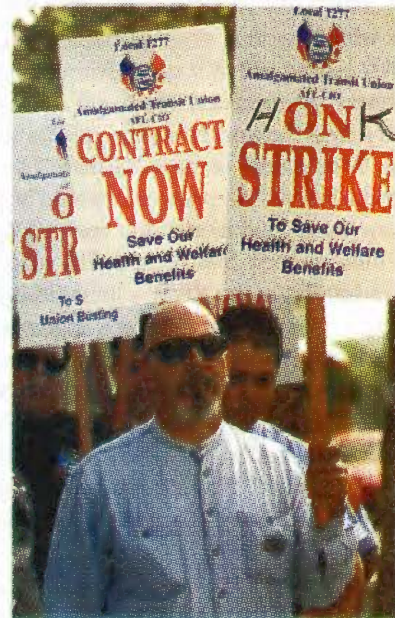
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# Unite Los Angeles Strikers in a Solid Battle Front!

Photos: Nam Y. Huh/AP



NOVEMBER 4 — For three weeks now, southern California supermarkets have been struck in a bitter battle involving 70,000 grocery workers in the United Food and Commercial Workers. Then maintenance workers in the Amalgamated Transit Union walked out, shutting down mass transit affecting 400,000 riders a day. At the end of October, the Service Employees International Union representing 50,000 Los Angeles County workers rallied to protest a breakdown in contract negotiations.

Southern California is in the midst of a major strike wave. In every case, the sticking point is an attempt by management to shove skyrocketing health care costs onto the workers. Yet due to the narrow business-as-usual unionism of the UFCW/ATU/SEIU bureaucrats, each of these struggles is being waged separately. Instead of striking all the grocery chains simultaneously, the UFCW struck only one; the others locked out their

workers. Instead of organizing anti-union outfits like Wal-Mart, union tops blame undocumented immigrant workers for driving down wages. This is a program for defeat.

To win this crucial fight, the struggles should be united in a *fighting triple alliance* demanding full employer-paid health care for all workers, full and part-time. *Elected strike committees* should be formed, with delegates who can be recalled at any time. Prevent scabbing by building and defending *mass picket lines that nobody crosses*. Extend the strikes to all supermarket, mass transit and municipal/county workers with *flying picket squads*. Instead of impotent consumer boycotts, mobilize labor's power to *cut off deliveries to scab operations*. Demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

***Unchain the power of labor by breaking with the capitalist Democrats, build a class-struggle workers party!***

history) call for U.S. troops out of Iraq, denounce the energy conglomerates and claim to present a socialist program. But their reformist "socialist" rhetoric does not represent a break from bourgeois electoralism. On the contrary, their various demands for action (more jobs, raise the minimum wage, stop deportations) don't go beyond bourgeois democracy and add up to the classic "minimum program" of social democracy. Significantly, however, the Spartacist League (SL), which for several decades stood on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism against such pseudo-socialist claptrap, has come out for voting for SWP candidate Britton for governor. This represents another sharp shift to the right by the now-centrist SL.

The SL calls to vote "yes" on the recall of Davis, presenting this as essentially a radical-democratic measure harking back to the 1911 reforms of California's Progressive Party governor Hiram Johnson. But while the demand that all representatives be recallable at any time is a key element in workers (soviet) democracy, under capitalism even such supportable

mechanisms become just another part of the machinery of "democratic" electoral fraud. While authentic communists sometimes seek to use bourgeois elections as a platform for espousing their revolutionary program, the SL is instead building reformist illusions. In the present California case, one cannot separate the recall from the election, as they are simultaneous and indeed appear on the same (indecipherable) ballot. And in this rigged recall-election, which will likely go as usual to the highest bidder (Schwarzenegger is outspending the Democrats by something like \$20 million to \$13 million), the working people and oppressed have no choice between the main capitalist parties, a bevy of minor bourgeois candidates and a couple of social democrats.

To justify its call for "critical support" to the SWP candidate, the SL paper *Workers Vanguard* (26 September) writes:

"We originally decided to abstain on the recall because we want neither to support a capitalist politician, in this case, the Democratic governor, nor to implicitly support a capital-



ist (likely Republican) replacement. The SWP's election platform, which presents, in however crude a way, a working-class line, allows us to make concrete and clear-cut our opposition to Davis while at the same time expressing our opposition to the Republicans' attempted electoral coup."

So what does this supposed crude working-class line of the SWP consist of? WV cites Britton's call for a "workers' and farmers' government, which will abolish capitalism in the U.S. and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism," saying these are "Fine words (except 'farmers'? In the U.S., that means agribusiness)." Empty words would be more accurate, for this is the same kind of rhetoric spouted by pre-World War I reformists in their Sunday socialist schools. But the key to the SL's support to the SWP is their similar line on the war. WV writes: "We support Britton's statement, 'Our campaign demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Africa, and elsewhere.' To its credit, the SWP called to defend Iraq against the bloody American invasion. However, Britton also demands, 'Bring the GIs home now!' This slogan is an accommodation to the social-patriotic 'save our troops' wing of the anti-war movement...."

Let's examine this. In the first place, we looked at the SWP's *Militant* from the present back to before the beginning of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and nowhere did we find a statement calling to "defend Iraq" or any other language indicating that they stood militarily on the other side from the U.S. troops. Nor have we seen such SWP signs in antiwar demonstrations. From the outset the SWP called to "bring the GIs home," "bring the troops home," etc. While the *Militant* did occasionally put on a fig leaf of orthodoxy, saying "the troops, not our troops," their line is indeed social-patriotic. And it is barely distinguishable from that of the SL, which repeatedly headlines "U.S. Troops Out of Iraq!" "U.S. Troops Out Now!" (WV, 4 July and 26 September). At bottom, this is the same line as Workers World, the ISO and the upcoming October 25 "antiwar" demonstrations on the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now." For that matter, "U.S. Troops Out Now!" is the main headline of SEP candidate Burton's election statement. By WV's logic, this would place the SEP to the left of the SWP, and the SL should support Burton over Britton, or "critically" back them both.

Even over Cuba, the SWP pitched its message in bourgeois political terms: instead of calling to defend the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution, as Trotskyists do, it calls to "normalize relations" – something that even the grain-trading Cargill Corporation favors.

The fact is that the Britton campaign is no different politically than innumerable SWP election campaigns over more than three decades. What's changed is not the SWP but the Spartacist League. In the 1990-91 Gulf War the SL called to "Defeat U.S. Imperialism – Defend Iraq!" Today it sneers at the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International for raising this same slogan. In the absence of a *call to defeat the U.S. invasion and occupation*, which the latter-day SL *refuses* to raise, any difference between "bring the troops home" and "troops out" is merely semantic. By the end of the Vietnam War, the main slogan

of the SWP's National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) was "U.S. troops out now." *Out Now!* was the title of Fred Halstead's 1978 memoir on the Vietnam antiwar movement, and SWPers used to chant that while excluding (sometimes violently) radicals including SL supporters from popular-front confabs and "peace crawls." This line expresses the politics of *bourgeois* antiwar forces who want to cut U.S. losses before the imperialists really get bogged down in the Iraqi quicksand.

Thus the opportunist logic of the SL's "critical support" to the SWP is rooted in their strikingly similar lines on the Iraq war – and it is not the first time. Over Afghanistan, recall the SL's repeated uncritical hailing of Bay Area Democrat Barbara Lee for her "vote against the resolution giving Bush a blank check for war" (WV, 28 September 2001) – while covering up her vote for the \$40 billion war budget (see "SL/ICL Flinches on Afghanistan War," *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001). In contrast, we say that no support should be given to the SWP/SEP pseudo-socialist candidates. The Internationalist Group greets the military resistance and mass opposition to U.S. troops in Iraq as the colonial slaves of imperialism resist their conquerors, *fighting to drive them out*. As more and more U.S. soldiers come back in body bags and caskets, mass opposition to the occupation is spreading in the U.S., in particular among military families, and inside the occupation forces in Iraq. We call for proletarian action around the globe to defeat the imperialist invaders and colonial occupiers of Afghanistan and Iraq, pointing towards *international socialist revolution*. Only such revolution will the imperialist warmongers be disarmed and the spectre of imperialist war banished forever.

The answer to the California recall-election fraud must be a fight for a *revolutionary workers party*. While unions from the powerful International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) to the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) vainly try to drum up support for the discredited Davis and the Democrats, there should have been a struggle inside the workers movement, as well as among immigrants, blacks, Latinos and Asians, to break with the Democrats/Republicans (and Greens) and launch a *workers candidate for governor on a class-struggle program*. Mass layoffs, whether ordered by a Davis, a Schwarzenegger or a Bustamante, should be met with *state-wide strike action* shutting down the government, schools and ports, demanding jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no cut in pay (a *sliding scale of wages and hours*). Workers' power should be mobilized against CATIC as Bay Area unionists protested by the thousands against HUAC (the House Un-American Activities Committee) in the early 1960s. There should be mass union protest and labor action against the trial of ILWU Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman and the other Oakland longshore and antiwar protesters, also taking up the case of AFSCME Local 444 member Charles DuBois, fired by the East Bay Municipal Utility District in July.

The California ballot in the October 7 recall-election also includes Prop 54, which would bar the government from collecting any racial data. This proposition, which is billed as making the government "color blind," was authored by the same Ward Connerly who designed Prop 209 against affirma-



tive action and will be used to further discriminate against oppressed black, Latino and Asian communities by cutting back on services, gerrymandering election districts to minimize minority representation, cut back black and Latino college enrollment and the like. By outlawing the collection of any statistical information on race, Connerly & Co. want to make it impossible to demonstrate how the "justice" system systematically persecutes minority youth, just as the U.S. military tries to hide the thousands it has slaughtered by releasing no statistics on civilian and military casualties. The SWP and its candidate Britton shamefully call to abstain on this proposition (something the SL fails to mention in giving its "critical" support). Leninist revolutionaries, who seek to act as a tribune of the people by mobilizing the proletariat against all forms of oppression, call to *oppose racist Prop 54*.

Between Schwarzenegger's antics, the confusing ballots and media hubbub, the ruling class has tried to whip up a circus-like atmosphere around the California recall-election. This is an intensified expression of the bread-and-circuses quality of bourgeois elections in this epoch of capitalist decay. As in the declining Roman empire, the bread is becoming increasingly scarce amid continuing job losses and falling real wages in the supposed economic "recovery," while the TV-dominated electoral spectacles, focusing on personalities and fueled by vast quantities of money, become increasingly crass. Behind the unreal "reality show" quality of this electoral "survivor" game, the bourgeoisie seeks to distract attention from the real issues – war, racism, poverty – which their system spawns. A revolutionary party would break through this façade by mobilizing the power of the working class, of the exploited and oppressed, against the racist oppressors and immigrant bashers, opposing the imperialist war with internationalist class war.

In Year Three of the U.S. rulers' "war without end" for world domination, imperialist war and colonial occupation abroad intensify the bipartisan drive toward a police state "at home." This cannot be fought by the small change of bourgeois parliamentarism. Referring to France in the 1930s, when the rampant corruption of the Third Republic revealed a decomposing and rotting system, Leon Trotsky wrote:

"Capitalism not only cannot give the toilers new social reforms, nor even petty alms. It is forced to take back what it once gave. All of Europe has entered an era of economic and political counterreforms. The policy of despoiling and suffocating the masses stems not from the caprices of the reaction but from the decomposition of the capitalist system. That is the fundamental fact that must be assimilated by every worker if he is not to be duped by hollow phrases."

Noting that this is "why the democratic reformist parties are disintegrating and losing their forces one after another throughout Europe," the co-leader (together with Lenin) of the 1917 Russian Revolution and founder of the Fourth International summed up: "It is not the spirit of combination among parliamentarians and journalists, but the legitimate and creative hatred of the oppressed for the oppressors which is today the single most progressive factor in history." Today, the Fourth International must be reformed by adopting Trotsky's clarion call, "Not a Program of Passivity but a Program of Revolution." ■

## "California Recall and the Left"

In a follow-up article on "The California Recall and the Left" (*Workers Vanguard*, 24 October), the Spartacist League comes to the defense of the honor of the Socialist Workers Party, whose candidate they backed in the October 7 vote. We had pointed out that the SWP's line was never to "defend Iraq," as the SL claimed in order to defend their opportunist "critical support." After scrounging around *WV* came up with a quote from the SWP's *Militant* (7 April) saying that "many Iraqis have resisted the invasion. They defend their country's sovereignty and should be supported by working people around the world."

For the SWP to declare support for Iraqis who are defending their country is hardly the same as a left organization in the U.S. forthrightly calling to defend Iraq, the declared enemy of the U.S. invaders (and it's a far cry from calling to *defeat* U.S. imperialism, which neither the SWP nor the SL do). Secondly, a single wishy-washy mention of support to Iraqi resistance is nothing compared to the SWP's constant mantra of "troops out," repeated issue after issue on front pages and in editorials of the *Militant*. Moreover, defense of Iraq was not the demand of the SWP's California campaign, which called at most for withdrawal of U.S. forces, often using the language "Bring the GIs home."

That formulation clearly tries to sidle up to the "peace is patriotic" liberals who want to "defend our troops – bring them home." But these are all variations on the same theme – withdraw the troops, troops out, bring the GIs home – and it's designed to be social-patriotic. As we wrote, it "expresses the politics of bourgeois antiwar forces who want to cut U.S. losses before the imperialists really get bogged down in the Iraqi quicksand." The only reason the SL could confuse the SWP's line with defense of Iraq – i.e., taking the other side in an imperialist war – is that it is indeed just a watered-down version of the SL's current line, which since Bush declared the war over on May 1 has consisted of calling for "troops out."

In a rhetorical flourish, *WV* asks: "What is the IG for, 'Troops Stay'?" How very "amusing." As the SL knows perfectly well, the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International called to *defend Iraq* and *defeat U.S. imperialism*. Today we call to *defeat the colonial occupation* and to *drive the imperialist troops out of Iraq*. And where the opportunists address themselves to the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, we fight in the imperialist countries for *workers action* (strikes, labor boycotts) against the war and to build a *revolutionary workers party*. That cannot be done by supporting, however "critically," two-bit reformists like the SWP.

By the way, as an IG sympathizer in the Philadelphia area noted, since SWP candidates around the country ran on the same program, with the SL's new line it should have supported the SWP candidate for Philly mayor. If so, let's hear it. If not, why not?

## Internationalist Pamphlet Just Out!

# Marxism and the Battle Over Education

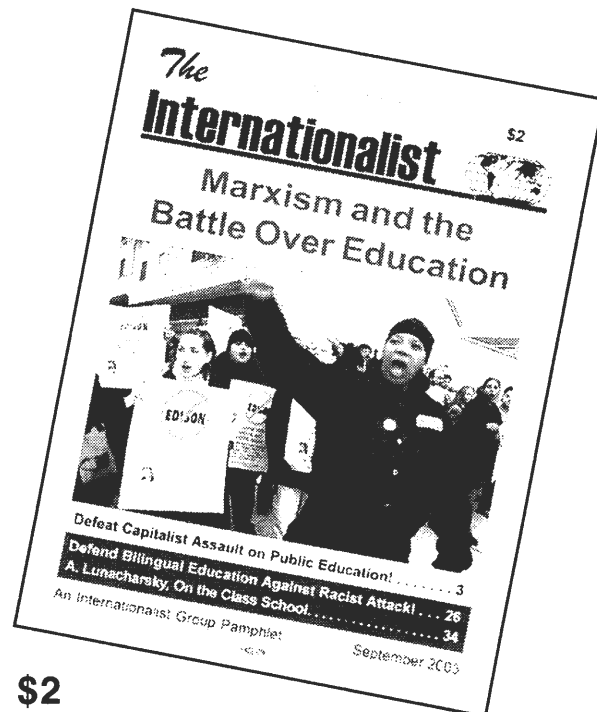
Reprinted below is the introduction to a special supplement to *The Internationalist*.

Today in the United States and internationally there is an ongoing battle over education. Ever since the tumultuous 1960s, reactionary forces have been waging "culture wars," seeking to return to the rigid imperialist regimentation of the early Cold War. Their appetites whetted by the counterrevolution that overthrew the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc during 1989-92, hard-line Cold Warriors have since taken aim at the minimal social protections of the so-called "welfare state." Now they are seeking to privatize public education, from pre-school up to university level.

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International, of which it is the U.S. section, have published a number of articles (reprinted in this collection) providing a Marxist analysis of the onslaught against the public schools and a communist program to fight it. There is the drive to eliminate any vestige of "open admissions" from higher education, the virulent attacks on teachers unions, the institution of exclusionary "high-stakes testing." In the name of "standards," the bourgeoisie is preventing a whole layer of poor, minority and working-class students from obtaining diplomas, consigning them to low-paid "McJobs," while concentrating educational resources on an elite. The huge influx of immigrants is to be forcibly "Americanized" by abolishing bilingual education, and youth are to be prepared as cannon fodder for the wars of U.S. imperialism in the "New World Order."

This special supplement to *The Internationalist* also contains several articles documenting the activity and initiatives of the IG and LFI in New York City and area schools. An article translated from our Spanish-language newspaper *El Internacionalista* on the ten-month 1999-2000 strike by students of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) documents how the privatization and elitization of the universities is being pushed by imperialist financial agencies. At the same time, we Trotskyists stress that efforts at educational reform in the interests of the exploited and oppressed and the fight against capitalist reaction cannot succeed without sweeping away the imperialist system, whose increasing decay means the wholesale destruction of past democratic and social gains. Today as in the past, *the fight for education must be part of the fight for international socialist revolution.*

Indeed, every epoch of social upheaval focuses public attention and political controversy on the schools, for deep-going changes in society are concentrated in the education of the coming generation. In the period leading up to the French Revolution of 1789-92, the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau prefigured the rise of bourgeois democracy and the educational system of the post-revolutionary regime. In the late 19th century, the overthrow of the Empire of Louis Napoléon and the consolidation of the capitalist French Republic (following the bloody defeat of the Paris Commune) were accompanied by the institution of secular education.



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Likewise in the United States, the Civil War of 1861-1865 and the abolition of chattel slavery opened the way to profound educational changes. Educating black slaves was banned by the slavocracy, which kept the oppressed in forced ignorance as it kept them in chains. There was an enormous thirst for learning among the black Union soldiers, who learned to read and write as they played a heroic role on the battlefield of the Second American Revolution. This continued among the black freedmen in the period of Radical Reconstruction, but was later throttled by Ku Klux Klan terror and the institution of Jim Crow segregation of the schools. The battle to desegregate American public schools during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s-60s played a key role in breaking the grip of McCarthyite repression in the U.S. The current *resegregation* of education marches in lock-step with the push towards a police state.

The institution of universal public education was an outgrowth of industrial capitalism, as the captains of industry needed literate workers. (At the same time, they sought to strictly control the content of the education provided to their "wage slaves" by the schools.) In the early 20th century, a movement for "progressive education" sought to modernize antiquated practices. But while there was a flourishing of new instructional methods, radical change was largely limited to isolated experiments. It was in the young Soviet workers republic that a genuine revolution in public education was first achieved, and while this was later deformed by the Stalinist bureaucracy and eventually undone by capitalist counterrevolution, the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky remains a beacon for the oppressed. ■





In September, students of the City University of New York (CUNY) in the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club of Bronx Community College and the Internationalist Club at Hunter College launched their newspaper, *Revolution*, which is published in accord with the Internationalist Group.

We print here the statement, "Why We Publish *Revolution*," and excerpts from the lead article, "Bloody Conquest of Iraq, Racist Attack on CUNY."

Other articles in the first issue include:

- Defend Hostos Student Leader Miguel Malo! (see page 19 of this issue)
- The Role of Students in the Workers Movement
- Revolutionary Reconstruction Group Joins the Internationalist Group
- Letter from Mexico to CUNY Students
- Sinister "SEVIS" Program: Racist Profiling of International Students
- State Repression on Campus

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## Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Bloody Conquest of Iraq, Racist Attack on CUNY Same Enemy, Same Fight!

By Moises Delgado

The U.S. colonization of Iraq is directly linked to the attack on CUNY – both are part of an all-out war on the oppressed. This war is being waged by the capitalist rulers and their Democratic and Republican politicians. It can be defeated only by mobilizing a more powerful social force: that of the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, here, in Iraq, and around the world. Our role as students who want to change the world is to put our energies and skills in the service of this worldwide fight.

Iraqis are fighting back. Good! Our enemy is here at home: the ruling class that wants us to be cannon-fodder for their impe-

rialist wars for world domination, that wants us to work for poverty wages (if we are lucky enough to get any job at all), and is trying to throw large numbers of black, Latino, working-class and immigrant students out of school. After all, learning can be dangerous – it can lead to questions. Military and police recruiters on campus use phony promises to trick people into joining up for wars of conquest abroad and repression at home. The more students know about the real workings and history of this society, the harder it may be to fool them. This is another link between imperialist war and the drive to push tens of thousands of us out of school.

So on June 28 tuition was hiked 25 percent! It is the biggest tuition hike since 1995. Across the U.S., tuition is being

## Why We Publish *Revolution*

It is not in the interest of the working people – black, Latino, Asian, white, immigrants or U.S.-born – to live and work only to make enormous profits for a filthy rich class of exploiters while being repressed and even killed by their police.

Nor is it in our interest to be sent to kill our class brothers and sisters anywhere around the world.

Nor is it in the interest of the workers and oppressed to support the government of our “own” exploiters, whether it is administrated by their Democrats or by their Republicans. On the contrary, our interest lies in their defeat.

Finally, it is not in our interest to stand by as the racist rulers steal our access to an education. The battle over CUNY is not just a “student issue,” it is an assault on all working people, minorities and immigrants. The working class has the interest and power to defeat this assault, just as it has the

power and interest to defeat the imperialists’ colonization of Iraq; to put an end to imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation through international socialist revolution.

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College, and the Internationalist Club at Hunter College, are launching *Revolution* to help win young people to the revolutionary program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, advanced today by the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International.

We are publishing *Revolution* to help bring revolutionary Marxism to students at CUNY and other college and high-school campuses. We publish *Revolution* because we are fighting for the liberation of all the oppressed, for a revolution by the working class all around the world – and we want you join us in this fight.

jacked up, particularly at public colleges. State governments claim poverty and cite budget deficits caused by the war drive. Here in New York this goes together with the hike in transit fares that makes getting to school even less affordable than before – even though the excuses for this increase were shown to be a fraud.

Most recently, capitalist greed and capitalist incompetence brought us the huge NYC blackout. The ruling class wants to keep you in the dark so you won’t know the truth about their system. One way they do this is through bourgeois “peace” candidates like Democrat Howard Dean, or Green candidate Nader in 2000, whose job is to hoodwink opponents of the war and lead them into the trap of capitalist electoral politics.

Revolutionary Marxism brings to light that the program of socialist revolution shows the only way to put an end to capitalism’s endless wars, racism and exploitation.

### Imperialist War on Iraq

In reality, the war on Iraq never stopped since the first Gulf War of 1990-91 by George Bush Senior. The deliberate bombing of waterworks and electrical plants followed by a decade of brutal economic “sanctions,” sponsored by the UN, resulted in the deaths of one million children. On March 20 of this year, having occupied Afghanistan and installed a puppet regime, George Bush Junior and his cohorts in the twin capitalist parties launched a new war of aggression and conquest against Iraq.

The assault on Iraq has been an *imperialist* war in every sense of the word. The Hunter Internationalist Club and the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College support the Trotskyist politics of the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International. In demonstrations against the Iraq war, the IG stood for the *defeat* of the imperialists and the defense of Iraq against this mass murder, invasion and colonial occupation. Student bureaucrats and reformists often tried to drown out our revolutionary chants with social-patriotic rhetoric about “books not bombs,” as if it’s a matter of budget “priorities.”

We look centrally to mobilize the power of the working class against the bosses’ wars, including by refusing to handle (“hot-carguing”) war materiel and workers’ strikes against the war. But the main obstacle to this is the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy which ties the unions to the bourgeois parties like the Democrats.

Faced with all the modern technology and massive firepower of the U.S. military, Iraqis sought to resist. Within days it became apparent to the Pentagon heads that their fantasy of the Iraqi population rising up to greet American “liberators” wasn’t panning out. The road to Baghdad included resistance by Iraqis determined to fight off the foreign invasion. The colonial occupation is generating continued opposition and resistance, and claims by the White House and Pentagon that everything is under control run up against mounting casualties among the forces of colonial occupation.

U.S. troops received orders to use increasingly brutal treatment in dealing with the occupied Iraqi people. The Iraq war will turn many of those who did this dirty work for U.S. imperialism into pathological killers. Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the Oklahoma City federal building, was trained to be a mass murderer in the 1991 Gulf War where he drove a bulldozer that buried surrendering Iraqi soldiers alive. Some of these returning soldiers will be put to work in local police precincts in inner-city communities all over the country to join the ranks of armed enforcers of capitalist rule – yet another connection between the war against the oppressed abroad, and attacks on the oppressed here “at home.”

This connection was shown once again when the NYPD added black city worker Alberta Spruill to the long list of those killed by the cops. At a march in Harlem on May 24, Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (RRC) and Internationalist Club members chanted, “1, 2, 3, 4, Defeat U.S. imperialist War! 5, 6, 7, 8, Smash the racist police state!” Just days afterwards, African immigrant Ousmane Zongo was killed by police bullets, reminding us all of how Amadou Diallo was gunned down here in the Bronx. As the RRC emphasized in a forum

last semester commemorating Diallo, the fight for black freedom, for immigrant rights and against racist police terror can only be a fight to defeat the imperialist rulers once and for all. It is a fight to put an end to the social system rooted historically in slavery and based on unending exploitation: the capitalist system.

### **Racist War on CUNY**

The all-out assault on the education of the sons and daughters of New York City's poor, immigrants and workers is a battle in the racist rulers' overall war, launched under the phony name of a "war on terrorism" after the indiscriminate World Trade Center attacks. Proof of this is that the prelude to this June's tuition hike was the "war purge" declared against undocumented students in fall 2001 under cover of "national security" – with undocumented students being cynically described as the supposed threat.

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at BCC and the Internationalist Club at Hunter are proud that alongside the Internationalist Group, we worked to organized a militant demonstration at Hunter College in November 2001 that drew hundreds to protest that anti-immigrant war purge. We warned that this attack against immigrants would be followed by an attack against all CUNY students.

What access we have won to education has always been through our own struggles. Power never yields anything without a battle, and the concessions the ruling class is sometimes forced to make can always be taken away so long as the capitalists have the power.

From the beginning the slave masters feared what might happen if their slaves were to become educated. So great was the fear that it was a crime to teach a slave to read. A century and a half after the Civil War destroyed chattel slavery, they fear what can happen if their wage-slaves become too wise to the real nature of this society. Above all else, they're fearful of the revolutionary implications when black people see that the struggle for their liberation is bound up with the struggle for workers power.

The CUNY system is a blot in their portrait of us as an uneducable people because it continues to produce brilliant minds that often excel in their respective fields. Add that the CUNY system is "guilty" of graduating more black and Latino students than any other university in the history of the United States and you will begin to understand why CUNY is constantly under attack. In reality CUNY's gates were opened to oppressed minorities' student population by the massive 1969 struggle that led to the establishment of open admissions. This was the result of campus occupations by black and Puerto Rican students and the insistence of the powerful labor movement that opening up the elite city university system had to benefit all working people. This victory transformed CUNY, and has been a target of the racist rulers ever since.

In 1976, the same year that the freshman CUNY class was for the first time in its majority composed of minority students, racists in office determined to destroy open admissions and put a stop to the influx of minority students.

But the rulers are not content to stop at the destruction of the 1969 gains; their success only encourages them to go further. On June 23 of this year, in a lightning-quick stealth attack in the auditorium at Baruch College – while the campuses were close to empty – the Board of Trustees voted the 25 percent tuition increase. This means students must pay \$4,000 per year at the four-year colleges, and \$2,800 at the two-year colleges. Only days later, on June 30, the State University of New York (SUNY) decreed a \$950 increase for in-state students and a whopping \$2,000 increase for out of state students.

It's nothing more or less than a racist, anti-working-class purge. The Republicans and the Democrats have found that one of the most effective methods is the use of the bursar to "build a color wall," as Jimmy Breslin called it in *Newsday* (June 24).

### **All Cops and Military Off Campus!**

At heavily minority CUNY campuses like BCC, military recruiters have been calling students up at home, talking about their majors and courses, and trying to sucker them into the army with promises of education aid. We demand to know what information the CUNY administrators are giving to these bloodsuckers, and that this practice be stopped now. At BCC opposition to military recruiters led them to stop showing up in uniform; now they sneak around the cafeteria in civvies. At high schools, meanwhile, under Bush's cynically titled "No Child Left Behind" Act, Pentagon recruiters are demanding lists of names, addresses and phone numbers of seniors so they can be pressured into the military.

We demand all cops and military recruiters off campus!

### **Mobilize the Power of the Working Class**

Pressuring students into the military goes together with targeting many for programmed non-graduation: as an August 27 *Times* article notes, "A preliminary report on the problems with a statewide math test needed for graduation from high school in New York State has found that even early trials of the test indicated that the average student would be unable to pass." Obviously this is no fluke. Excluding huge numbers of students is the whole point of these tests, tuition hikes and budget cuts.

Against this onslaught there must be an all-out fight for the basic democratic right of free public education for all. A revolutionary leadership is needed to link students to the enormous potential power of the multiracial working class, which has a vital interest in the right of its children to education. In its absence, the hand-raising of a few miserable capitalist appointees was enough to ram through the tuition hike.

As part of our efforts to build that revolutionary leadership, we participated in the protest of students (and some faculty) inside the CUNY board meeting in June. Among the chants we raised were: "Open Admissions, No Tuition" and "Abolish the Board of Trustees!" Student-teacher-worker control of the universities, nationalizing private universities, providing a living stipend for students so they can devote themselves to their studies; ripping out the turnstiles so public transit is free to the public; cops and military recruiters off



Scott Eels/Daily News



Members of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at BCC and the Internationalist Club at Hunter joined in unionization drive at Burritoville, July 2003.

campus – these demands are part of the overall fight for a workers government that can make quality, integrated education a reality for all.

former “issues director” for Rudy Giuliani’s mayoral campaign) to “take a stand” against the war and tuition hikes. Pathetic! Instead, campuses should have been shut down by student, teacher and campus worker action.

For its part, before the trustees’ vote the CUNY4All coalition put out a statement subtitled “Whose Side Are You On,” asking the Board if they stood with the students or with the millionaires.

The answer is not rocket science. The Board of Trustees and CUNY administration are the representatives of the ruling class whose task is to keep students, teachers and campus workers in check. There is a world of difference between a strategy of pressuring the rulers while criticizing the “policies” of their figureheads and administrators, and fighting for their defeat and expropriation as a class.

And here as in other things the communists set themselves apart as the one political tendency fighting against every form of illusion, deception and self-deception, to educate young people in class politics and win them to participate in forging a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that will take up their battles as its own. That is where the *power* lies to defeat all the attacks launched by the capitalist ruling class, and knock them off their pedestal of oppression through a revolution based on the proletariat, the workers of the world.

Moises Delgado

President of the *Revolutionary Reconstruction Club* (@ BCC-CUNY)

Member of the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International

Internationalist photo



Mobilizing for defeat of U.S. imperialism. CUNY students join with Internationalist Group in NYC protest against Iraq war, February 15.



## Students' Rights Under Attack at CUNY

# Defend Miguel Malo!

## *Hostos College a Miniature Police State*

Photos: Sue Kellogg



The protest picket outside the Bronx Criminal court September 25 drew more than 50 participants, including students from many CUNY campuses, faculty, and a contingent of union workers (below). Above right: Miguel Malo holding picture showing his back after he was brutally beaten by CUNY cops in August 2001.

For two years, the administration of the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Bronx D.A. have pursued a vendetta against Miguel Malo, president of the Student Senate at Hostos Community College. Because he was holding up a sign protesting cuts in bilingual and Spanish programs, Miguel was thrown to the ground and arrested by several CUNY campus cops in August 2001. He was hit with a barrage of phony charges, including assault and disorderly conduct, and faces up to a year in jail if convicted. The Internationalist Group along with the Hunter Internationalist Club and the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College have played a leading role mobilizing in Malo's defense. This fall a united-front campaign demanding the charges be dropped won the support of dozens of campus groups, including student government presidents at ten CUNY campus, the faculty union, other NYC unions and several leftist groups. The IG has emphasized that the repression against Miguel Malo threatens all



CUNY students, and is part of the war on the home front. As U.S. imperialism lays waste to Iraq, it targets immigrants, minorities and working-class students here. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Defend Miguel Malo!*



## 2 Arrested As Bronx Court Again Postpones Frame-Up Case Against CUNY Student Leader

More than 50 students, faculty and union activists demonstrated September 25 outside Bronx County Criminal Court in defense of Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo. This was Malo's 25th court appearance in his case, even before a trial begins. The judge turned down a defense motion to dismiss the trumped-up charges against Malo, which have been changed repeatedly by the prosecution. Afterwards, court officers arrested two students and threatened more arrests as they tried to provoke a confrontation with several dozen supporters of Malo present for the hearing.

BRONX, NY – Early Thursday morning, September 25, dozens of demonstrators held a picket across from the Bronx County Criminal Court demanding, "Drop All charges Against Hostos Student Leader Miguel Malo!" The protest was endorsed by numerous student clubs, student government leaders at ten different campuses of the City University of New York (CUNY), the University Student Senate, the Hostos chapter of the Professional Staff Congress (the CUNY faculty union) and other union activists. A contingent of immigrant workers from UFCW Local 1500, representing deli workers, participated in the protest. The more than 50 spirited picketers chanted "CUNY is not a prison, Drop the charges now!" "Stop the frame-up!" and "Workers, students united in struggle!"

Miguel Malo, president of the Student Senate at Hostos Community College, faces a year in jail for the "crime" of holding up a protest sign. The Bronx student activist was assaulted by campus security officers during campus registration in August 2001. Throwing him to the ground, they arrested him for standing in a public area holding up a sign protesting campus cuts in

**I'm Going to Court September 25  
to Support Miguel Malo**



**Stop the Frame-Up!  
Drop the Charges!**

Thursday, September 25, 9 a.m. sharp  
Bronx County Criminal Court, 215 East 161st Street, one block east of  
Grand Concourse (take the 4 or D train to 161st Street)

**You Be There Too!**



bilingual and Spanish programs. Later he was hit with false charges of assaulting two CUNY "peace officers" (campus police), resisting arrest, harassment and disorderly conduct. In the two years in which the pre-trial hearings have dragged on, the prosecution has not provided any evidence or witnesses to back up their charges against Malo. In the September 25 hearing, the judge rejected a defense motion to dismiss the charges on grounds of denial of the right to a speedy trial. Yet another hearing was called for November 3, at which time a trial date is to be set.

After the hearing, several dozen of Miguel's supporters, many of whom were unable to enter the crowded courtroom, gathered to hear his lawyer, Ron McGuire, explain what happened. Court police began harassing individuals, trying to provoke a "riot." They suddenly seized one student, Javier Genao of Brooklyn College, for having a sticker declaring his support for Malo, even though he removed it. When another student, Moises Delgado of Bronx Community College, asked what was going on, he too was thrown against the wall and handcuffed. Two women students were rudely shoved and threatened with arrest. When leaders of the protest asked what the charges were, the police refused to answer and a squad was summoned to push Malo's supporters out of the building. Genao and Delgado were charged with disorderly conduct and released.

Miguel Malo's attorney, Ron McGuire, says: "CUNY has been using its peace officers as a political police force against student demonstrators. Miguel Malo was arrested for exercising his Constitutional rights. We will prove that the charges against him are completely unfounded." Mr. McGuire is also representing Miguel Malo and six other students at four CUNY colleges in

a federal civil rights lawsuit, *Rivera vs. Fernandez*. The suit alleges that CUNY has systematically used its "peace officers" to harass students protesting the war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as CUNY trustees' policies. ■



**MIGUEL MALO** muestra la foto de su reciente detención por la policía.

### Arrestan estudiantes en protesta

REDACCION  
P. 30

Una audiencia para ventilar cuatro acusaciones penales en contra de un estudiante universitario, finalizó ayer con dos arrestos en la sesión en la Corte Criminal de El Bronx.

Miguel Malo, quien era estudiante de Hostos Community College, enfrenta un juicio por agresión a la policía, ocurrido en agosto de 2001, durante una protesta en la casa universitaria. La manifestación estudiantil, en ese entonces, fue convocada en oposición a los recortes de los programas bilíngües de la universidad que forma parte del sistema de Universidades de la ciudad de

New York (CUNY).

Ayer, un grupo de estudiantes y activistas efectuó una protesta, esta vez para pedir la anulación de cargos contra Malo, mientras se realizaba la vigésimo sexta audiencia judicial a la que asiste el acusado.

"Estamos reclamando contra una acusación falsa, porque en realidad el agredido fue él", dijo Abraham Negrete, estudiante del CUNY y activista.

Unos cincuenta manifestantes que al término de la audiencia ingresaron al tribunal, pedían que los cargos de alteración del orden público, hostigamiento y resistencia al arresto, también sean anulados. Entre los manifestantes se encontraban inmigrantes trabajadores de los delis, Moises Delgado.

**Press coverage of arrests at Bronx courthouse. Hoy (left) and El Diario-La Prensa (below).**

### Dos detenidos en protestas por detención de estudiante

JOSE ACOSTA  
P. 11

Con dos estudiantes arrestados culmino ayer una manifestación frente a la Corte Criminal de El Bronx, en protesta por el juicio que se le sigue al líder estudiantil de Hostos Community College, Miguel Malo.

Los detenidos fueron Moises Delgado, de Bronx Community College, y Javier Genao, de Brooklyn College.

"Es un intento más de intimidar a los estudiantes que defienden a Malo", dijo Abraham Negrete, uno de los

manifestantes.

Más de 50 estudiantes y activistas comunitarios participaron de la demostración, en contra del juicio de Malo, quien ya ha comparecido en corte en unas 25 ocasiones en los últimos dos años.

De acuerdo con los estudiantes, Malo, quien es presidente del Senado Estudiantil de Hostos, enfrenta un año de cárcel por el crimen de sostener una pancarta de protesta.

El hecho ocurrió durante una protesta en el 2001 en Hostos, en la que

según alegan los estudiantes Malo fue asaltado por un guardia de seguridad del plantel.

Ron McGuire, el abogado de Malo, dijo: "CUNY ha estado usando sus oficiales de paz como oficiales políticos contra los estudiantes que protestan. Miguel Malo fue arrestado por ejercer sus derechos constitucionales".

El abogado le pidió al juez revocar los cargos contra el estudiante. El caso fue cancelado para el mes próximo.



# Hostos Student Leader On Trial ... for Holding Up a Sign!

## Drop the Charges Against Miguel Malo!

By Abram Negrete

*Reprinted from Revolution No. 1 (September 2003).*

This is a crucial moment in the fight against the repressive vendetta that the administration of the City University of New York (CUNY) and District Attorney's office have been waging against Miguel Malo, Student Senate president at Hostos Community College.

For almost two years now, they have been trying to railroad Miguel for the "crime" of holding up a sign at an August 2001 protest against cuts in Spanish and bilingual programs. They have pressed the false, dangerous and downright ridiculous charge that Miguel supposedly "assaulted" two CUNY "peace officers" – when numerous faculty and student witnesses saw that it was Miguel who was assaulted, by several campus cops who threw him to the ground. They have "amended" their story and charges over and over (for the sixth time now on April 14), refused to turn over their videotapes of the protest where Miguel was arrested, failed to bring key witnesses to court, and even tried to throw Miguel's lawyer off the case.

On March 17, the DA's office made a verbal motion to disqualify Miguel's attorney, Ron McGuire, who has been defending CUNY students for many years. The DA's "argument" was that McGuire should be disqualified because he is also representing Miguel and others in a civil rights lawsuit against CUNY and the campus police. McGuire filed the civil suit last November on behalf of students at various CUNY campuses, charging that CUNY "peace officers" are systematically violating students' free speech rights.

The DA's blatant and punitive attempt to prevent a defendant from having the legal counsel of his choice visibly shocked just about everyone present that day, including jaded court personnel and lawyers present for other cases. The judge denied the verbal motion.

The DA's highly unusual attempt showed how determined the authorities are to make an example of Miguel Malo. Clearly, their interest goes beyond this one case. They are using the prosecution of Miguel to clear the way for even greater repression throughout the CUNY system. This is part of the broader onslaught against oppressed minorities, labor and basic civil rights. Racist profiling, mass round-ups of immigrants, the sinister "Patriot Acts" I and II, and the overall escalation of police-state measures – these are the "home front" of the ever-expanding imperialist war waged by the U.S. ruling class abroad.

**Hostos, a miniature police state:** Hostos Community College is run like a small police state. Located in the heart of the Bronx barrio, it is a campus of immigrant, black and Hispanic

students from poor and working-class families. "Controlling" minority and working-class youth is a central concern of the ruling class as it escalates its attacks on democratic rights and social programs. At Hostos, many crucial policy decisions are openly made by the campus police chief himself. Hostos cops have gone so far as to tell supporters of my organization that they are forbidden to distribute leaflets on the same city block as the main campus entrance.

When students protested racist cuts in bilingual and Spanish programs in August 2001, the brittle Hostos regime freaked out and unleashed the campus cops to run wild. Their response to the protest has been aptly described as a "lock-down" of the campus. They decreed that no protest of any kind would be permitted in the building where registration was taking place, and arrested Miguel when he held up a sign in a public atrium that is the traditional "free speech area" in that building. They prohibited professors from other campuses, and even the president of the faculty union, from entering Hostos at all. The campus police openly proclaimed that Hostos had been closed to "outsiders." They arrested four students and the next day arrested CCNY professor Bill Crain when he tried to go on campus.

Charges against everyone but Miguel Malo were eventually dropped. Hit with phony charges of assault, resisting arrest, harassment and disorderly conduct, Miguel faces up to a year in jail if convicted.

**The crime of holding up a sign:** The fact that Miguel was arrested *for holding up a sign* was proclaimed at the very beginning of the complaint CUNY filed in court against him. It states: "Deponent is informed by (CUNY Peace Officer) Sgt. Sean White, that at the above time and place, the defendant began to hold up a sign and protest against the college administration inside the above location after being told by the informant that such protest would only be permitted outside the building, away from where school registration was taking place. Deponent is further informed by informant that defendant was asked to leave the registration area and refused at which time the informant attempted to lawfully place the deponent under arrest."

**Test case for repression at CUNY:** The prosecution of Miguel Malo is a *test case for repression at CUNY*. The DA's office and CUNY administration obviously see it that way – and activists throughout CUNY and beyond need to see it just as clearly, in order to fight this repression.

In pushing the frame-up charge that Miguel supposedly assaulted two CUNY "peace officers," the CUNY administration and DA's office seek to push through a major change: to have "assault on campus cops" made legally equivalent to "assault on NYPD officers." *The purpose is to greatly*

# CUNY Is Not a Prison!



Sue Kellogg

**DEFEND MIGUEL MALO FORUM.** On September 16, a forum was held at Hunter College to publicize Miguel Malo's case. More than 50 people attended, hearing a presentation by Miguel's lawyer, Ron McGuire, and 15 other speakers, including the incoming and outgoing presidents of the CUNY United Student Senate.

*strengthen their apparatus for repression of student protests against the war and against tuition hikes, budget cuts, and all the attacks on the minority and working-class students at the largest urban university in the United States.*

Repression on CUNY campuses has been growing rapidly over the past period, with repeated incidents at Hostos, the College of Staten Island, CCNY, Hunter and elsewhere. What many activists do not know is that CUNY's campus police force, "SAFE," purchased 100,000 rounds of live ammunition, including hollow-point bullets and birdshot. (Even the NYPD is legally prohibited from having some of the items the SAFE cops bought.)

A recent posting to the CUNY Senate discussion forum noted that CUNY's "public safety director," William Barry, is a former FBI agent. It cited an article from the *Washington Post* (25 January) reporting that as part of the repressive onslaught packaged as the "war on terror," the "FBI has strengthened or established working relationships with hundreds of campus police departments." As we have previously noted, "the 'SAFE' unit was formed as a little red squad, compiling lists of student activists, videotaping student activities." It even disguised a surveillance camera as a smoke detector outside the main office for political activists at City College. When the CCNY Graduate Student Council and its newspaper exposed this, they were suspended. (See "Smash Racist Purge of CUNY—Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition!" reprinted in the

December 2001 Internationalist Group pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students — Stop CUNY's "War Purge"!*)

The way that phony charges of "assaulting a police officer" are used against demonstrators after police attack them was shown again when three Hunter students were hit with this charge, as well as resisting arrest and "inciting to riot," after cops brutalized them near Times Square during an anti-war protest on March 20. Their case is coming up in early June; we must demand all charges against them be dropped now!

*Defending Miguel Malo is crucial to the fight against repression at CUNY; it is crucial to defending the rights of us all. It is necessary to publicize this case much more widely than has been done so far, so that students at all CUNY campuses become thoroughly familiar with it; and to mobilize powerfully to demand DROP THE CHARGES NOW!*

**The trial of Miguel Malo is now set to begin November 24. It is important that as many people as possible come to court to show their support for Miguel. No confidence can be placed in "justice" from the courts.**

**A support demonstration has been called for Monday, November 24, 2003, 9 a.m., outside Bronx County Criminal Court, 215 East 161st Street, one block east of the Grand Concourse. (Take 4 train to 161st St. in the Bronx.) This will take place before the 9:30 court hearing, which will be in room Part TAP-1. Arrive early.**

# Another Brazilian Union Demands Freedom for Mumia in Strike

On November 5 and 6, the Rio de Janeiro state union of health workers (SINDSPREV) held a two-day strike against the popular-front government's refusal to meet the most basic demands of health workers and the needs of the population for decent medical care. At the initiative of supporters of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of the League for the Fourth International, the union included among its strike demands freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical black journalist in the U.S.

In its last congress, the union voted to participate in international protests for Jamal's freedom and to raise this demand "in strikes and other mobilizations of our workforce." Earlier, in April 1999 Rio teachers stopped work to demand freedom for Mumia, and in November of that year this was raised as an official demand by bank workers, postal workers and the state CUT labor federation in strike actions.

**Mobilize workers power to free Mumia now!**

## Servidores da Seguridade defendem libertação de Abu-Jamal

O jornalista negro norte-americano, Mumia Abu-Jamal, está no corredor da morte há 21 anos, aguardando o veredicto da justiça. Ele é vítima de uma injusta condenação por matar um policial. A luta por sua liberdade é uma luta pela liberdade de todos os presos políticos.

Em 1981, Mumia foi condenado à morte por matar um policial. A luta por sua liberdade é uma luta pela liberdade de todos os presos políticos.

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que faz parte da luta contra o racismo e a pena de morte. A luta por sua liberdade é uma luta pela liberdade de todos os presos políticos.

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# Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants

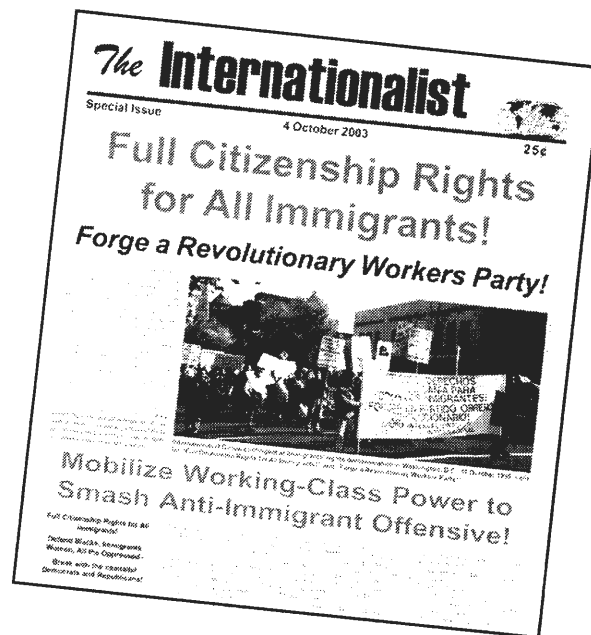
In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, a wave of anti-immigrant hysteria swept the country, particularly directed against Arabs, Muslims and people from the Near East and South Asia. The Internationalist Group called for class-conscious workers to defend immigrants against chauvinist attacks, and to mobilize to demand release of the detainees rounded up in government sweeps. Immigrants' rights groups that had been campaigning for an "amnesty" law, appealing for support from the bourgeois politicians, could get nowhere.

Two years later, liberal and labor groups decided to make a new push with a "Freedom Ride" across the United States that would "urge President Bush and members of Congress to support immigrants' rights." But George Bush and the twin capitalist parties are *enemies* of immigrant workers, blacks, Latinos, Asians and all the oppressed, so the lobbying effort in Washington got nowhere. Meanwhile, the freedom riders were subjected to police harassment, as cops boarded buses looking for "illegals," and in some places fascist provocation.

The ride culminated at Flushing Meadows Park in New York City, where several tens of thousands of immigrants and trade-unionists gathered for a rally. From the stage there was lots of star-spangled rhetoric and a hip rendition of the national anthem, but many demonstrators were opposed to U.S. imperialism, its wars and anti-immigrant chauvinism.

The Internationalist Group put out a special 8-page tabloid issue in English and Spanish with a compilation of articles from *The Internationalist* and *El Internacionalista* on immigrants' rights struggles, including:

• Mobilize Working-Class Power to Smash Anti-Immigrant Offensive!



- "Reds" and Immigrants
- ¡Por acción obrera contra el terror de la migra!
- La campaña por la sindicalización de las marquetas de Nueva York en la encrucijada.

More than 600 copies of *The Internationalist/El Internacionalista* supplement were sold at the rally.

Readers who would like to obtain copies may do so by sending 25¢ per copy plus 50¢ to cover mailing costs to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008.



# Indian Trotskyists Say: No Indian Troops to Iraq!

We print below an article translated from Revolutionary Fourth International (June-July 2003), published by a small group of Indian Trotskyists in Calcutta that sympathizes with the LFI. The struggle for working-class action against the invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq is intimately linked to the fight to build revolutionary workers parties that stand for the defeat of "one's own bourgeoisie," not only in the imperialist countries but also, as the RFI article emphasizes, in semi-colonial countries such as India, which is seeking to solidify ties with the U.S. as a junior partner in imperialist slaughter.

## Build a Revolutionary Mass Movement Against Sending Indian Troops to Iraq

Due to the pressure of U.S. imperialism and in the class interests of the Indian bourgeoisie, the central government of India is trying to send troops to Iraq. The home minister of India, Mr. L.K. Advani (who has been convicted on criminal charges for the destruction of the Babri mosque) gave assurances of this to the U.S. government when he was in the United States. Then a U.S. delegation came to India for discussion. Now the Indian government is bargaining with the U.S. over how this is to be done (i.e., how they will use the banner of the United Nations, to whom the Indian army will report in Iraq, who will pay for sending troops, etc.). Beyond this, the Indian government is taking time to reach a consensus so that no party would try to capitalize on discontent over possible deaths among the Indian soldiers in Iraq during the next general election. But the main question at present is why all political parties (from the BJP to the CPM to Congress and the TMC\*) which voted for a motion in the Indian parliament (the Lok Sabha) condemning the brutal attack on Iraq are now acting like a deaf and dumb boy, although the revisionist left parties say they are against sending Indian troops to Iraq.

\* BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, the right-wing Hindu communalist party which is the core of the present Indian government. CPM: Communist Party (Marxist), the largest of the several Stalinist parties, forms the core of the popular-front government of the state of West Bengal. Congress: Indian National Congress, the party of Jawaharlal Nehru and the Gandhi dynasty (Indira, Rajiv and Sonia) which governed India for most of the first four decades following independence. TMC: Tamil Maanila Congress, an ethnic party based in Tamil Nadu, generally allied with Congress.

\*\* NGOs: non-governmental organizations, lobbying groups which despite their name generally live off funding from various imperialist agencies and generally pose as defenders of human rights, environmentalism and other liberal causes while channeling opposition sentiment into support for capitalism.

\*\*\* DMK and AIADMK are rival Tamil parties. Janata Dal was a purportedly secular bourgeois party based on the Hindu lower castes which won national elections in alliance with the Hindu chauvinist BJP and led the Indian national government in the early 1990s but subsequently fell apart, with some sections gravitating to the BJP and a rump calling itself Janata Dal (Secular).



**Revolutionary Fourth International, in Bengali, published in Calcutta.**

But that is not from the perspective of making a mass movement for revolution against capitalism, or from a revolutionary class orientation. What their activity comes down to is rampant electoralism. All they do is aimed at getting votes according to the advantages or disadvantages derived from their positions in regional or state governments. It's not a matter of ideology, they are driven by opportunism and pragmatism. So on the U.S. attack on Iraq, the revisionists blocked with various organizations (even NGOs\*\*) in the state of Kerala, but they are silent in West Bengal. The reason is that in West Bengal they are in office, while in Kerala they are out of power. If they do anything in West Bengal, where they control the state government, they will face some problems, so they stay mum.

The bourgeois parties (i.e., BJP, Congress, DMK, AIADMK, Janata Dal, etc.\*\*\*) are acting in the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie in keeping silent on the sending of Indian troops to Iraq. U.S. imperialism assured India, in exchange for sending Indian troops to Iraq, that they will give some construction contracts in Iraq, even construction work in the oil industry, to Indian companies. Such contracts amount to very little for U.S. imperialism, but mean a great deal to the Indian bourgeoisie. The fascist Shiv Sena have opposed the proposal for troops to Iraq, but they do so because they are focused on Pakistan. Their demand is that first U.S. imperialism should assure India that it will give India full support against Pakistan and then Indian troops can go to Iraq. It's only because of these bargaining tactics that they are against sending Indian troops to Iraq.

*continued on page 35*

# **Filipino Workers: For Class Protest Against Visit of Imperialist Chief!**

**Defeat U.S.-Arroyo-AFP War on Moro Peoples!  
Defeat the Colonial Occupiers of Iraq!**

*The following leaflet was issued by the Revolutionary Communist Group (RKG) of the Philippines, which sympathizes with the League for the Fourth International.*

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista is calling on all working people to mobilize to protest the arrival of George W. Bush, the leader of the number one imperialist country in the world. It is important that the Filipino workers show their class power against this Imperial Visit and the increasing intervention of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and in South East Asia. Workers' power must be mobilized to defeat the imperialist invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Workers actions like picket protests, sit-down strikes, walk-outs and work stoppages and labor boycotts of war cargos should show U.S. imperialism, its allies and stooges like Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as the class-enemy of the Filipino workers and the working masses of the world.

It is also important to show the resistance against the leading puppet regime of U.S. imperialism here in South East Asia that, in copying its master, has also launched a class-war against the Filipino workers, the Moro peoples, and all the oppressed under the guise of "war against drugs and terrorism". While the reformist left (including the CPP, Sankas and others) seeks a "popular front" with the corrupt bourgeois opposition, the Filipino workers should show that the Arroyo regime and the Philippine bourgeoisie as a whole is the local puppet of imperialism in the Philippines and have to be swept away through workers revolution.

The working class should not flinch before the threats of this regime that it will "arrest all of those who will protest on October 18" since this regime has long been carrying out not only arrests but also brutal and violent dispersals of protests and actions. The working class also should not listen to the appeals of bourgeois politicians that "protests are inappropriate during Bush's visit as this will as this will embarrass the Philippines in the eyes of the world" but instead protest the destruction and rape that the U.S., its allied imperialist and "friendly" governments are carrying out against semi-colonial countries. It should also angrily denounce the U.S. and its allies' continued pressure on and threats against the deformed workers states of North Korea, China, Vietnam and Cuba, its deployment of American mercenary troops in different parts of the Philippines, and the assassinations, arrests and attacks on workers organizations and other so-called left groups.



**Imperialist butcher-in-chief George Bush and his junior partner in war crimes, Philippines president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, during imperial visit, 18 October.**

The class power of the workers is immeasurably greater than that of the bourgeois rulers, who hope to keep on looting the country while propped up by U.S. bayonets. U.S. imperialism is the number one terrorist in the world, and all the threats are only designed to prevent and gag any protest against this arrogant visit. The Vietnamese working people defeated the French and American imperialists and the Filipino workers drove out the U.S. military before.

On October 18, class sisters and brothers, meet Bush and Arroyo, the top imperialist and his flunkey, the class enemies of the workers of the world with defiant and powerful workers actions.

**DEFEAT THE COLONIAL OCCUPATION OF U.S. AND  
BRITAIN IN IRAQ!**

**FOR WORKERS ACTIONS TO DEFEAT THE COLONIAL-LIKE WAR OF THE U.S. AND THE ARROYO REGIME  
IN MINDANAO AND ELSEWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES!**

**THE "WAR ON TERRORISM" OF BUSH AND ARROYO IS A WAR TO TERRORIZE THE WORKING-CLASS  
IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE WORLD!**

**FOR INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVOLUTION  
TO SWEEP AWAY IMPERIALISM AND THE FILIPINO  
BOURGEOISIE!**

October 13, 2003

Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista

Wally Santana/AP



## Soap Opera "Coup Attempt" in the Philippines

# Perplexities of the July 27 Incident

*The following article was written by the Philippine RKG (Revolutionary Communist Group), which sympathizes with the League for the Fourth International.*

MANILA — "Coup — Coup — Roo — Coup!" the rooster crowed in the early morning of July 27 as around 200 officers and enlisted men surrounded and took over the Oakwood Hotel in Makati [the downtown business district of Manila]. The "mutineers" (as some of the bourgeois press labeled them) called themselves the "Magdalo Group" — in reference to the Magdalo faction of Emilio Aguinaldo, one of the leaders of the Katipunan [the clandestine group fighting against the U.S. invaders] during the bourgeois Philippine Revolution of 1898 — and come from all the services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Its leaders are junior officers of the AFP (from the rank of captain on down). The group itself was comprised mainly of the highly skilled, specialized branches of the AFP in the forefront of the Philippine military's counterinsurgency campaign.

Army captain Gambala and Navy lieutenants Trillanes and Maestro-Campo — three of the mutineers' leaders — demanded that President Arroyo, Defense Secretary Reyes and Chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) Corpus step down. (Later, before they were "convinced" to "go back to barracks," they toned down their demands, asking only for Reyes' and Corpus' heads.) They threw in charges of corruption within the military, specifically the rampant selling of arms by officials of the Department of National Defense, particularly Reyes, and in the AFP. The junior officers claimed these arms had ended up in the hands of the leftist and Muslim insurgents they were fighting.

They also accused certain senior officials of the AFP of orchestrating bombings and attacks on the Muslim populace in Mindanao that would later be blamed on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other "terrorist groups."

As the hours progressed, the "coup plotters" (as others in the bourgeois media termed them) and Arroyo's regime were both adamant in their positions, refusing to give in to the other's demands. Arroyo herself looked gloomy in front of the media as she gave an ultimatum that the mutineers should surrender by 5 p.m. (later extended to 7 p.m.). Senators, among them opposition leader Gregorio Honasan, and several retired generals were scrambling in negotiating for a peaceful resolution of the "conflict."

By 7 p.m. (Arroyo's extended ultimatum), the so-called mutiny ended as the Magdalo group agreed to return to the barracks provided that the regime would ensure that participants in the incident (except the core of officers) would not be persecuted and



Bullitt Marques/AP

**Philippines "coup plotters" Gambala (seated left) and Trillanes (right) in press conference, July 27. Armbands bore symbol of Filipino independence fighters against U.S. invasion in 1898. Yet mutineers accuse generals of undercutting war on leftist and Muslim insurgents.**

that the core of the Magdalo Group alone would take the responsibility. With that dramatic soap opera ending, the mutiny ended.

Meanwhile, some of the "mainstream" (i.e., fake) left hurriedly offered their support to the Magdalo Group. The Maoist/Stalinist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Party Information Bureau issued a statement tacitly supporting the Magdalo Group. The CPP-PIB noted that "the CPP agrees with the three main revelations by the rebel AFP officers. In the group's statement read this morning by Maj. Gerardo Gambala, the rebel group exposed the rampant corruption of senior officers, the direct responsibility of Defense Secretary Reyes and ISAFP Chief Gen. Victor Corpus in the Davao bombings and the plan of the Arroyo ruling clique to perpetuate itself in power by means of imposing martial law come August." The CPP spokesperson, Gregorio Rosal, called on "military officers and enlisted men with legitimate grievances to 'further deepen their understanding of the why the AFP is on a losing course and why the revolutionary people's war is on the correct and winning course and is widely supported by the people'." He also called on "junior officers who are truly and sincerely pro-people to 'emulate the tradition of Lt. Crispin Tagamolila and join the revolutionary movement or find ways to coordinate and cooperate with the revolutionary movement'." Lt. Tagamolila of the AFP joined the CPP-led New People's Army in the 1970s.

On the other hand the Lagmanite trade union center Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP – Solidarity of Filipino Workers\*) mobilized about 5,000 people the day after the July 27 incident in conjunction with Arroyo's State of the Nation Address to Congress to demand "that the Arroyo government answer the soldiers' charges." Another group, the Stalinist Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP – Party of the Filipino Workers) portrays the Magdalo group as a bourgeois nationalist group. Ramani da Silva, International Officer of the PMP, when asked by the Australian reformist *Green Left Weekly* (6 August) how he would describe the mutineers' political perspective, answered: "They are motivated by a strong nationalist sentiment, but are new and raw politically." He also said that the Magdalo Group is a "new generation of soldiers who are legitimately disgruntled with the conditions within the military."

With all the support of the "mainstream left," even many ordinary working people tended to view the Magdalo Group as giving a "new kick" against the traditional carnival-like politics that has been the natural character of the Philippine political landscape, and some may wonder if the Magdalo Group is truly revolutionary.

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista warns that the Magdalo Group recalls mutinies by hard-line junior officers in Latin American who in the 1980s sometimes staged *cuartelazos* (barracks revolts), striking a nationalist posture while calling for intensified counterinsurgency wars (financed, supplied and advised by the Pentagon) against leftist rebels. Although the Magdalo Group cannot be compared with the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) headed by then colonel Gregorio Honasan that instigated a coup d'état against the dictator Ferdinand Marcos that eventually was called EDSA 1 [the so-called "People's Power" revolt that was actually orchestrated by the military] in 1986, then later launched several coup attempts against the Aquino regime during the late '80s, their class interests are the same as the RAM – that is, to maintain and strengthen the rule of the local bourgeoisie.

*The "mutineers" are first and foremost anti-Communist and anti-Moro.* Proof of this is their deployment in units that are at the forefront of counterinsurgency operations (like the Light Reaction Company), urban warfare ("anti-terrorist") and demolitions, and the fact that their main demand (corruption in the AFP, etc.) is essentially calling on the AFP and the bourgeois state itself to wage a tougher and leaner campaign against the so-called "red menace" and "Moro terrorists." For revolutionary communists, it is important to understand the class alignment of forces instead of indiscriminately throwing support to groups or forces alien to the working class. *It is elementary for communists and any class-conscious worker to know who is the enemy.*

In the case of the Magdalo Group, it is clear that they are a clique of junior officers and personnel disgruntled at the way their corrupt superiors in the AFP and the government handled the counterinsurgency program. They are not a "new generation" of soldiers "legitimately disgruntled with the conditions," as the PMP claims. Their so-called "coup d'état," "mutiny," or

whatever the bourgeois press calls their Oakwood take-over sought to strengthen the institutions (specifically the AFP) that preserve and protect the ruling class and the exploitative capitalist system. By launching a soap opera "mutiny," they sought to pressure the bourgeois state to wage a leaner and tougher offensive against its "enemies" (i.e., the working class, the Moro peoples and all the oppressed).

*It is quite a wonder that the so-called "mainstream left" like the CPP, PMP, and the BMP have thrown their support to this anti-communist bunch of military officers.* These "mainstream leftists," satisfying their opportunist popular-front program, decided to embrace the Magdalo Group to help them to "further deepen their understanding," as if the Magdalo Group did not understand that their enemy are the workers, and all the oppressed!

The host of fake left groups that see the "mutineers" as "nationalists" try to cover their eyes, ears and mouths from the truth, namely that every "alliance" the working class makes with so-called "progressive and nationalist military forces," results in the bloody defeat and destruction of the working class (Stalin's alliance with Chiang Kai-shek in China in 1925-27, leading to the Shanghai massacre of April 1927; the Indonesian CP's support to Sukarno, leading to the slaughter of 1 million leftists and unionists in 1965; and Allende's illusions in "constitutionalist" military officers led by Pinochet in Chile that led to the bloody Santiago coup in September 1973 are only some of the examples on this long list). It is no wonder that these "leftists" have repeatedly been outflanked by the bourgeois opposition in EDSA 1 (led by the "yellow movement" of the late CIA-boy Benigno Aquino together with Enrile and Ramos) in 1986 and EDSA 2 in 2001 (led by Arroyo, Ramos, de Venecia and the pro-capitalist Council for Philippine Affairs).

The key for the working class and revolutionary-minded militants concerning the July 27 incident is to clearly see the need to break with the "tradition" of making allies with a faction of the bourgeoisie, and the need to break with the fake left that keeps making these popular-front alliances with the bourgeoisie. The RGK fights against this treacherous "tradition" and seeks to build a genuinely revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that will lead in the struggle for the workers to expropriate their class enemy, the bourgeoisie (including the various bourgeois opposition factions). The road towards decisive victory of the working class is through the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution – the program of the Russian October Revolution of 1917 – against the Stalinist and social-democratic class collaboration and popular-front alliances as the CPP, PMP and the BMP do.

The RGK calls on workers, women and revolutionary-minded individuals who clearly see the elementary difference between the class interests of the anti-Communist forces that participated in the July 27 incident and the bankrupt opportunist politics of the fake left to contact us at [rgk7@hotmail.com](mailto:rgk7@hotmail.com) or at [internationalistgroup@msn.com](mailto:internationalistgroup@msn.com) or visit the [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org) website to learn more.

September 20, 2003

Central Group, REBOLUSYONARYONG GRUPO NG MGA KOMUNISTA - PILIPINAS

\*Filemon ("Popoy") Lagman, head of the BMP union federation and a former leader of the PCP, was assassinated in February 2001.



# The Class War In Southeast Asia

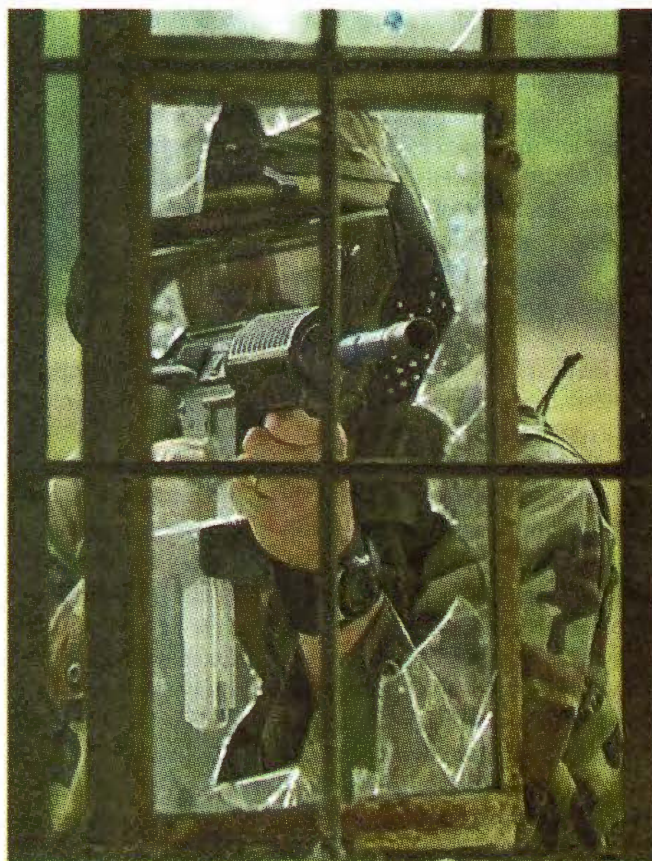
## Oppressed Peoples, Deformed Workers States Under the Imperialist Gun

*We print below a document of the Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista (RKG – Revolutionary Communist Group) of the Philippines.*

After the destruction of Iraq by the number one terrorist in the whole world, United States imperialism, and the eventual carving up of the country by companies that are close to the gangster Bush and his cronies, the U.S. is now focusing its attention on Southeast and East Asia. The working class and the myriad peoples in this region are experiencing a new campaign of class war and terror through brutal attacks and a war of aggression perpetrated by the imperialist U.S. and its satraps of the local ruling bourgeois class. From Aceh and Irian Jaya (West Papua) in Indonesia, to Mindanao in the Philippines, to North Korea and China, the working class and the different peoples in this region are facing a long and bloody war of aggression. A war of aggression that will not stop until it has completely crushed all the peoples fighting for independence and self-determination. A war of aggression that is being fed by U.S. imperialism by giving assistance to its puppet regimes to eventually tighten its hegemony in Southeast Asia and to prevent the ambitions of rival imperialist countries particularly Japan. A war of aggression whose aim, ultimately, is to foster counterrevolution in the remaining deformed workers states from within and without, especially North Korea and China, and to bring back the exploitative and oppressive capitalist system that these countries have already brought down.

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista, along with the League for the Fourth International, unconditionally defends China, North Korea and all the remaining deformed workers states from imperialist strangulation by the U.S. and its gang of imperialist and capitalist countries. We also defend the different peoples and national minorities from attacks and aggression by the local bourgeois states in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and the Philippines.

The war in Mindanao, Aceh and other parts of Southeast Asia, and the state repression that accompanies the protest against these wars; the brutal dispersals of rallies against the war on Iraq; the almost daily raids of the police and the military on working class, Moro, and urban poor communities; the arrest of poor people accused of being drug addicts and small-time pushers, and the turning of the whole population into hostages by tightening the state's security measures in the name of "the war against drugs and terrorism," all point in one direction: the need of the local ruling class and imperialism to maintain their grip on the population in order to further exploit and oppress the working class and all the oppressed peoples and sectors of South East Asia. It is important for the class-conscious workers to lead all the oppressed against imperialist domination and bourgeois repression and exploitation. *For the proletariat to liberate itself,*



Aaron Favila/AP

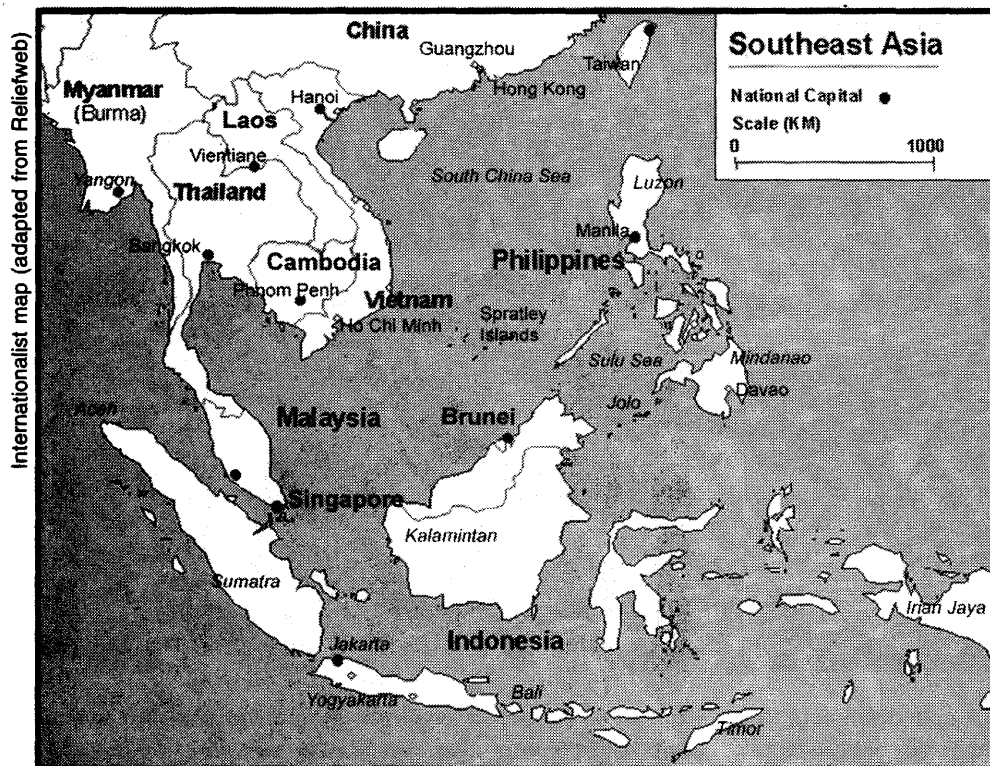
**U.S. Special Forces sniper in "Operation Urban Terrain" last April, part of U.S./Filipino military exercise. Imperialists and their puppets are preparing for war on urban workers. All U.S. forces out of the Philippines!**

*through workers revolution, it must carry forward the struggle for the liberation of all the oppressed.*

### Indonesia, Philippines and the Bloody Domination of Their Bourgeoisies

In Indonesia, the bourgeois state now headed by Megawati Sukarnoputri has launched a brutal campaign that, according to its military spokespersons, will ultimately "neutralize the capability of GAM rebels" (or the Free Aceh Movement). *In simple words, kill all those who will not recognize the authority of the Indonesian state.* At last count, over 10,000 people have already died since the start of the GAM rebellion in 1976, fighting for an Aceh state independent of Indonesia. These past months, after the declaration of "the neutralization of GAM" by the Armed Forces of Indonesia (ABRI), the army has already killed hundreds of Aceh civilians, many of whom were summarily executed after being accused as GAM supporters. There were even re-





ports that families were murdered by Indonesian troops for the simple "crime" of not having red-and-white Indonesian flags put up at the front of their houses when the terrorist troops of ABRI [Indonesian armed forces] passed by.

Like the people of Aceh (who have struggled for independence since they were first occupied by the Dutch around the 18th century), the other peoples colonized by Indonesia also suffered the same experiences. These include: the Timorese and Papuan peoples of East Timor and Irian Jaya respectively. In the name of "national and republican unity," these peoples have experienced and are experiencing countless murders (killing of prominent independence leaders like Theys Eluay in Irian Jaya in 2001), destruction of their livelihoods, homes and future at the hands of Indonesian troops. In East Timor alone, already over 200,000 people – almost a third of the entire population of Timorese living in East Timor – have been slaughtered, like the massacre of 200 demonstrators in Dili, East Timor's capital in 1991, or the violence and mayhem after the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence in 1999, as well as through hunger and sickness. This does not include the almost yearly attacks, burnings, rapes, and killings of Chinese and Christian minorities that resulted in hundreds of victims.

In the Philippines, the bourgeois state, now headed by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who seeks to be not just another puppet regime but a "super-puppet" of the U.S. imperialist "superpower," has launched so-called "punitive actions" against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other "terrorist" groups. This kind of statement by the warmongering bourgeois regime of Arroyo literally means to *attack and destroy all the fighting Moro peoples in Mindanao*. As of last count, roughly 300,000 people have been dislocated by the

bombings and military operations of the blood-drenched Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). It is estimated that over 100 people have been killed between the two sides.

In the name of the so-called "campaign against terrorism," the Arroyo regime has produced an excuse to attack and prepare a "final solution" to the question of the Moro peoples, the Bangsamoro. It has also given the bourgeoisie an excuse to clamp down on security, aiming at mobilizing the citizenry against suspect people and movements. Even simple Indonesian smugglers of diesel and oil are suspected of being terrorists and arrested by the paranoid military and the Philippine National Police (PNP). The bourgeois regime of Arroyo is trying desperately to connect all those fighting the bourgeois state, portraying them as "ter-

rorists," especially left-wing groups and organizations like the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), and independence movements like the MILF, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and others. *Such actions by the ruling class of the Philippines mean that everybody who would mobilize the masses against what the bourgeois state defines as terrorism can be suspected and attacked as "terrorists."* In addition, they seek to divide the whole working class as well as the indigenous peoples and other oppressed sectors, as well as fostering prejudices against ethnic Indian and Chinese living in the Philippines, who are pictured by the bourgeois state as smugglers, druglords and usurers.

Accompanying the brutal occupation and military operations, is the forced integration of people or the flooding of "settlers," usually from the race or ethnic group of the dominant bourgeois faction in power. The main objective of this is to physically outnumber the indigenous groups of people in a particular area in order to ensure that the "majority" of the population is for the incorporation of the area as a province of the bourgeois state. In Indonesia, during the 1960s and early 1970s, most of the settlers in East and West Timor, Irian Jaya (West Papua), Aceh and other outlying areas of the Indonesian state came from Java, which is also the home of the dominant bourgeois factions (Sukarno, Suharto and the present Sukarnoputri regime).

In the Philippines, the massive distribution of lands in Mindanao to Christian settlers from Luzon and Visayas has resulted in the dislocation of the Moro peoples from their ancestral lands. From the passages of Commonwealth Acts numbers 2254 and 2280 of 1913 (that created agricultural colonies and encouraged migrants from the north to "settle" in

On 9 March 1906, American soldiers led by General Leonard Wood massacred 900 men, women and children of the Philippine Moros in the crater of Mount Dajo on Jolo Island. The photo was published in the *Johnsontown Weekly* (Pennsylvania). A year later General Wood went to the photographer and destroyed the negative, unaware that prints had already been circulated. The Anti-Imperialist League, then headed by Mark Twain, circulated thousands of copies of this photo.



Mindanao) during the American Period, i.e., under direct U.S. colonial rule, to the formation of the Land Settlement Development Corporation in 1950 for the planning and “development” of lands in Mindanao, the grabbing of lands of the Moro population and their eventual dislocation have not abated, and instead have intensified. The recent military campaign by the Arroyo regime in the provinces around Lanao Lake against so-called “Muslim terrorists and extremists” is aimed in seizing lands that are very rich in timber and natural gas for multinational and transnational corporations (with the help of cronies of the “First Gentleman” Mike Arroyo) to exploit.

*Why does the bourgeois class do this?* The bourgeoisie in Indonesia and the Philippines primarily seeks to foster violence and disunity among the classes it rules over. This is the reason why the working class and the different peoples in the society are divided. By spreading and nurturing backward bourgeois ideology like racism, chauvinism, discrimination and prejudice to “different” ethnic groups and races of people, the bourgeoisie is ensuring that it can continue its class rule. *Always, the minority groups that are “different” are victimized with atrocities and attacks. They are blamed by the bourgeoisie as the cause of sufferings of the dominant group of people and of the backwardness of their society.* What could be more ideal for the perpetuation of their rule, but that the working class and other oppressed sectors and groups be divided on the basis of color and race, religion and nationalities of peoples? The aggression in East Timor, Aceh, Irian Jaya as well as against ethnic Chinese and Christians by the militarist Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, and the war devised by the gunpowder-filled brain of Arroyo against the Bangsamoro in Mindanao as well as against “communists,” ethnic Chinese and Indians, are needed so they can strengthen their class rule.

*This goes to show that the bourgeoisie in Indonesia, Philippines and elsewhere will do anything to be able to*

*exploit and extract super-profits from the toilers even to the point of instigating wars and placing the blame on the oppressed. This is the reason why the war in Aceh, Irian Jaya and Mindanao, including the Sulu islands, will never end unless the bourgeoisie is brought down. Otherwise, the “ethnic cleansing,” pogroms and killings unleashed against groups that are “different” in race, religion, sex or ethnicity from the dominant bourgeois class in a country will continue. We demand: Fight to defeat the aggression by the bourgeois state against minority ethnic groups and oppressed peoples!! For the right of independence of Aceh, Irian Jaya and Mindanao!! For workers revolutions to end the exploitative and oppressive rule of the bourgeoisie!!*

In neocolonial countries like the Philippines and Indonesia, the only program that will be able to answer the national question and the working-class struggle for the liberation of its class and all of the oppressed is the program of *permanent revolution* put forward by Leon Trotsky in 1905, that was given body and soul with the victory of the Russian workers revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the only victorious and revolutionary workers state headed by soviets or workers councils. The Russian Revolution of 1917 showed the way to the resolution of the major fundamental democratic problems, particularly the issue of oppressed peoples and the woman question. Under the internationalist leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the oppressed nations of the tsarist “prison house of peoples” were given the right to choose to be part of the federated workers republic or to opt for independence (as in the case of Poland, Finland and the Baltic states, which became bourgeois republics), while the Bolsheviks fought for workers revolution in all the territories of the former empire and beyond. Women won the right to free abortion on demand, as well as the right to divorce and to full participation in social labor. The fledgling workers republic made painstaking strides to educate millions

of people, especially women and oppressed peoples. However, these rights and gains were grievously undercut (and in some cases eliminated) by the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution under Stalin and his heirs.

The local bourgeoisies of Indonesia and the Philippines will not and cannot resolve the oppressed peoples and woman questions since this runs counter to its interest, as they are tied by a thousand strands to imperialism, as we have seen time and again. This is demonstrated by the pitiless exploitation of Filipina women workers, who produce super-profits in low-wage sweatshops, and the brutal oppression of the Bangsamoro peoples. Only through the program of permanent revolution can the democratic tasks of agrarian revolution, national liberation and political democracy be fully resolved by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat under the leadership of an authentic communist party that undertakes socialist tasks as well (i.e., collectivization of the means of production, centralization of the planning and use of resources for the benefit of the whole society, etc.) and extends the revolution to the imperialist centers. The Philippines and Indonesia have conditions like that of Russia in 1917 (backward capitalist economies that primarily support the industries of the imperialist countries; oppressed peoples; women being oppressed with the aid of a "moralist" religion, etc.). The program of permanent revolution also counters the Stalinist dogma of "two-staged revolution" and "popular/democratic front" that always led to bloody defeat, from China in the 1920s to Indonesia in 1965, the Huk rebellion of the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and the NPA rebellion from the 70s to the present in the Philippines.

That is why it is necessary for the working class to fight not only for its own liberation but also for the rights of the Aceh, Moro, Papuan and other oppressed nationalities and peoples. Recognition by Indonesian and Filipino workers of the right to self-determination (that is, the right to secede) will give a tremendous push to oppressed nationalities, and will be key in breaking the ideological stranglehold of bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism on the working class itself. Under the leadership of the working class fighting for proletarian revolution, the struggle of oppressed peoples and minorities for their liberation will not be limited to replacing the bourgeois state that oppressed them with another oppressive bourgeois state, as the Moro secessionists and some of the fake left desire. National oppression will continue until the local bourgeoisies and their imperialist masters are defeated – in the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia as well as in the imperialist countries. Only under a revolutionary workers state will the Bangsamoro, the peoples of Aceh, Papua and other national minorities and peoples be able to achieve genuine national liberation, freely choosing whether this shall be in the framework of independent national states or



Pat Roque/AP

**Column of Philippine army tanks deploy in Jolo, August 2003, threatening "killer blow."**

as part of revolutionary workers states in the Philippines and Indonesia, which would provide for extensive regional autonomy. In either case, we Trotskyists would fight for a socialist federation of Southeast Asia which would provide a framework for harmonious emancipation of the great number of nationalities and peoples whose development has been stunted by the heritage of colonial and semicolonial capitalist rule.

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista, as a revolutionary group of workers, is presenting some of the transitional program for the oppressed peoples of Indonesia and the Philippines:

- Recognize the right of oppressed nationalities to independence (self-determination) from colonial-like rule of the bourgeois states of Indonesia and the Philippines; call for defense of the insurgents and defeat of the military offensives against the Aceh, Moro, and Papuan peoples;
- Fight for the troop pull-out of Indonesian and Filipino troops as well as imperialist foreign troops from Aceh, Mindanao and Irian Jaya through workers actions such as strikes and other mobilizations and not through petitions and symbolic rallies;
- Fight for equal rights of national and ethnic minorities under a revolutionary workers state – down with racism, religious, ethnic and regional discrimination and prejudices; for equal opportunities in employment and wages;
- For equal status for all languages, no privileged "official" position for the Tagalog dialect masquerading as the national language of the Philippines;
- Abolition of the chains of exploitation and oppression of women, which are rooted in the institution of the family in patriarchal capitalist society; for women's full participation in social labor – equal pay for equal work; for the right of choice of women to control pregnancy, with the provision



of safe contraceptives and free abortion upon the woman's request; free, quality medical service for all; free 24-hour childcare; for the socialization of household tasks in a planned economy; for women's liberation through *socialist* revolution;

- Recognition of the rights of gays and lesbians as members of society; to struggle against their discrimination in schools, and jobs; to fight for their equal rights to marriage and to live legally and recognized under a workers state;
- Expropriation of the lands and private property of despotic and big landlords and capitalists; expropriation of properties, plantations, mining and logging areas owned by multinational and transnational corporations as well as domestic capitalists; stoppage of the granting of logging concessions and permits to all privately owned companies and private individuals; setting-up of workers committees to run and manage the lands and properties of the capitalists that are expropriated;
- Working-class self-defense from attacks by the bourgeoisie; for multi-ethnic workers defense guards and workers militias based on the mass organizations of the working class and the toiling peasants, to fight ethnic, racial and sectarian attacks and attacks from the bourgeoisie and prevent a repetition of pogroms such as happened in Indonesia after the uprising against Suharto and in East Timor following the plebiscite for independence in 1999;
- For workers revolutions that will bring down the rule of the bourgeoisie and imperialism in the Philippines and Indonesia; for a multi-ethnic and multi-racial workers revolution; for the extension of workers revolutions to South East Asia and in the imperialist countries, most immediately Australia and Japan; for a Socialist Federation of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

### **Imperialist Threats and Aggression Against the Peoples of Southeast Asia and the Deformed Workers States**

The local bourgeois classes are always making actions in consonance with their master, the only superpower terrorist in the world, U.S. imperialism. Under the cover of its "war against global terrorism," the U.S. aids the local ruling bourgeoisies in their war against the secessionist movements and insurgencies. In fact the campaign of the militarist tacticians in the White House has given the local ruling bourgeoisies in Indonesia and in the Philippines permission to attack and destroy all those groups, organizations, and movements that are fighting the bourgeois state including petty-bourgeois peasant-based liberation movements. Some of the support that the U.S. has given and is giving includes: supplying arms and military hardware and the construction of infrastructure which will facilitate greater mobility of the troops of the puppet state as in Mindanao and other parts in the Philippines; sharing of intelligence data on opponents of the bourgeois state supported by imperialism, like that provided to Indonesia when it invaded East Timor in 1975; the elevation of the status of the Philip-

pinas into a "Major Non-NATO Ally," which means priority in military aid and troop deployment; as well as other overt and covert support. Besides these, Bush's cronies have promised different kinds of economic aid, including participation in the rape and plunder of devastated Iraq. The U.S. published a list of "foreign terrorist groups" that they will chase and destroy with the help of the local puppet states. These lists are, in fact, "enemies lists" supplied by the bourgeois puppet regimes listing organizations and movements of workers, national minorities and other groups of the oppressed.

In the last four decades of the 20th century, the main excuse of U.S. imperialism for its global marauding was the need to support the local ruling classes in their fight against the threat of "communism," and to shore them up against the different nationalists and separatist movements. That is why it has always sought to maintain military bases in the region, notably Clark AFB and Subic Bay Naval Station in the Philippines. During the height of its war against the workers and the peoples of Vietnam, these two military bases were the launching pad of military operations and a "rest and recreation" station of the invading troops of U.S. imperialism. This resulted in countless atrocities by the American troops such as: rape and degradation of women by having brothels and sex bars around the perimeter of the bases; the shooting on sight of scavengers, the majority of whom were children, "just for fun and target practice," when caught around the base; and the exposure of base workers and their families to hazardous chemicals and biological elements that until today is still felt by them.

The withdrawal of U.S. imperialism from Clark and Subic in 1991 mainly resulted from the collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state and what was seen then as the weakening and "death of communism." But after only a decade, spokesmen of the United States are beating the drums again announcing their intention to set up military bases in the region particularly in the Philippines, even on a temporary basis only. The current excuse by the war-monger cronies of Bush is the "global war against terrorism" – *which basically means the global war against the working class and the whole of mankind through direct intervention and the giving of military aid and support to puppet regimes.*

No matter what their excuse, the United States cannot hide the fact that its main purpose is to counter what it sees as a threat, the rising influence of the rival imperialist countries of Japan, France and Germany. It also has to answer the declaration of the deformed workers state of North Korea that it will continue its program of developing nuclear arms. *Whatever the label or slogan used by the "tacticians" of U.S. imperialism, one thing is certain, it wants to nail down the domination of the United States over the whole world. And all those that will not recognize U.S. hegemony, are to be attacked and crushed. We answer: Defeat the Imperialist War Against the Working Class and the Various Peoples of the World!! Defeat the Colonial Occupation of Iraq!! Workers of the World Unite, Lead the Struggle to Defeat the Aggression of U.S. Imperialism!! For Workers Revolution to Defeat the Imperialist Class War!!*

## The Bankrupt Program of Class Collaboration with the Bourgeoisie on the National Question

Amid all these attacks, the posturing left movement has not taken any independent stand against the aggression of U.S. imperialism and the local ruling classes. If they have protested, these are mainly symbolic protests, that aim to pressure the bourgeoisie and imperialism to stop the war or are that mobilize under the poisonous program of class-collaboration and the popular front.

In Indonesia, the People's Democratic Party (PRD) is pushing for intervention by the United Nations (U.N.) to resolve the questions of self-determination of the different peoples of Indonesia. The logic of this program is to give way to an "independent" or "neutral" imperialist overlordship, such as occurred with the people of East Timor in determining their national fate. *But the truth is that the U.N. is not neutral or independent.* In its history as an organization, the U.N. has always sided with the interests of the imperialists. From the Korean War to Somalia, Iraq and Cuba, the "neutral" U.N. has always used the forces of its member countries to serve and protect the interests of the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and Japan. East Timor still has no industry because of the plans of U.S. imperialism and its junior imperialist partner Australia to develop it into a "tourist spot" and a logging country. The conservative government of Australia and the Labor Party "opposition" even sought to block the East Timorese from having a big stake in developing its rich oil fields! That is why "intervention" by the U.N. in the national question in Indonesia and other countries will never be a solution.

In 1998, when the economy of Indonesia began to melt, and the workers and students undertook an uprising, the PRD still continued their class-collaborationist line, this time in silent collaboration with Washington and the International Monetary Fund, which had decided it was time to get rid of Suharto. This resulted in taking up the cause of an anti-worker, anti-women enemy of national minorities – Megawati Sukarnoputri, the Indonesian version of Aquino and Arroyo who was catapulted and kept in power by the military. The PRD program on the national question only reflects their general program of unifying with all the "democratic forces" – that is, in essence, the bankrupt practice of popular frontism. This brings us back to the bloody history of Indonesia in 1965, wherein, after years of practicing popular frontism with the "democratic forces" including the "progressive military" under a "democratic coalition government," the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) was crushed by a coup d'état by the "progressive military" headed by the criminal Suharto.



### 1965 Indonesian Massacre Prepared by Stalinists' Class Collaboration

In the early 1960s, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was the largest in a capitalist country, with some 3 million members (top photo). But the support of PKI leader Aidit (right) for nationalist president Sukarno prepared the way for the 1965 massacre, in which a million PKI members, leftist trade-unionists, peasants and members of ethnic minorities were slaughtered by rightist forces under the command of General Suharto (middle photo, with baton). The U.S. embassy supplied lists of Communists to be eliminated.



The U.S. for its part, after suffering embarrassing losses one after another in the Vietnam War, saw an opportunity in Indonesia with Suharto and the PKI's opportunist program by supporting the military coup d'état against the PKI and the nationalist elements lead by Sukarno, the father of Megawati Sukarnoputri. This finally paved the way for the annihilation of over a million people including members and supporters of the PKI (which was then the biggest communist party outside the Soviet Union and China), trade-unionists, Indonesian nationalists, and oppressed peoples. Eventually, this allowed the U.S. to recover and regroup its forces and launch a renewed imperialist offensive that we are still experiencing today.

The PRD's program of class collaboration and popular frontism is a reflection of its co-thinkers in the Australian fake left particularly the Democratic Socialist Party of Australia (DSP) which basically acts as a left cover of the "Labor" Party that periodically manages the second-rate imperialist state of Australia. Although the DSP tries to dress up as Leninist and at times even borrows Trotskyist language to justify its politics, this outfit like the rest of the pseudo-Trotskyists and outright reformist social democrats pushes the Menshevik program of two-stage revolution where the first stage is for the working class to struggle for the "revolutionary-democratic" tasks, postponing to the unseen future any socialist tasks. In reality, from China in 1927 to Indonesia in 1965 and 1998, the first stage invariably ends in a defeat for the working class. In Australia, these left-talking social democrats seek to act as managers of the capitalist-imperialist state, content to leave political and economic power to the bourgeoisie. In the end, this opportunist program will not lead the working class to its liberation, instead, it will only tie the workers to the bourgeoisie.

What is needed is for the working class of Australia and New Zealand to break from these opportunist parties that foster the illusion that capitalism can have a more "humane" face. Capitalism (imperialism in its present stage) can never have a humane face since it is driven by competition, domination and the need to produce super-profits. At the same time, these opportunist parties, by tailing after the Labor Party and "Labor" governments that dutifully manage the capitalists' affairs thereby support the suppression of the working class, left and liberation movements in ANZ and in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. For the Australian and New Zealand working class to break from the social democrats and the opportunist pseudo-socialists will be a first step in the struggle for its own liberation and socialist revolution and to kick out the bourgeoisie and its "Labor" Party partners who acted as deputy sheriffs of U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and Asia. Advances in building a revolutionary workers party in Australia and New Zealand will give a powerful push to the working class in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and a victorious socialist revolution in these junior league imperialist states can



**Megawati Sukarnoputri was elected with support of Indonesian left. Now Indonesian army has resumed arrests of supporters of Free Aceh movement (above), and brutal military operations.**

only take place in close collaboration with the workers of Indonesia and Philippines.

In the Philippines on the other hand, the fake lefts are calling to "stop" the war in Mindanao. Their only difference is over who among them is the noisiest in shouting about "forcing" the Arroyo government, which positively salivates for war, to stop the war on the Bangsamoro. The Communist Party of the Philippines, while calling for "people's war" against the Arroyo regime, only offers the Moro peoples "genuine autonomy under a democratic coalition government" as supposedly representing self-determination. But the essence of the CPP program for the Moro peoples is that Mindanao should not secede from the Philippines. This is a manifestation of their narrow, nationalist ideology of "socialism in one country" and demonstrates the denial of the basic right of the Bangsamoro to self-determination, i.e., independence.

Other groups of reformists and fake lefts raise abstract calls and agendas "for the right of self-determination of the national and tribal minorities" (Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines). There are also groups that do not want to tackle the national question but are explicitly against the independence of the Moro peoples and Mindanao because "Mindanao, rich in natural resources, cannot secede" (Socialist Workers Movement – SKM / Party of Marxist-Leninism of the Philippines – PMLP). On the other hand, the Socialist Labor Party (SPP) of Sonny Melencio claims that the struggle for the "eradication of all forms of national oppression" is a "distinct part of the revolutionary-democratic tasks during the first stage of the continuing Philippine revolution." But what they mean by that is political support to the Moro Islamic nationalists. The SPP emphatically rejects the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution (see "SPP Founding





Bullitt Marquez/AP

**Anger over war on Iraq and U.S. intervention in the Philippines is diverted by reformist left into popular-front coalitions. Defeat imperialist war with class war!**

Congress," *Green-Left Weekly*, 21 July 1999), and in the name of "revolutionary democracy" hails the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF is for the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindanao based on *sharia* law (an Islamic code largely based on the Koran, dating from the 7th century). Such an obscurantist theocratic regime would hardly be democratic, much less revolutionary, and would subject women to intensified oppression. The SPP flaunts a glaring contradiction, by claiming it is for the right of women to have abortions while at the same time it supports a movement that would subject women to the bondage of medieval religious laws and reactionary morals.

Melencio openly declares "the SPP's support of the MILF's struggle" for "national liberation, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) "ceased to be a national liberation force" when it was coopted by the Philippine government in 1996 (see "The Moro Question," *Links*, May-August 2001). Yet the MILF itself agreed to a ceasefire with Arroyo in 2001, has had extensive negotiations with the government since 1997 and is by no means opposed to cutting a deal with Manila for some kind of bogus "autonomy." Like its co-thinkers in the Indonesian PRD (who supported the Javanese chauvinist Sukarnoputri), and the DSP of Australia (which supported the anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary Polish nationalists of Solidarność), the SPP virtually accommodates every bourgeois opposition. Thus the SPP even supports the Cordillera People's Liberation Army of Conrado Balweg that is integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines and has become an anti-NPA/anti-communist vigilante group, and has the effrontery to quote Lenin and Trotsky in attempting to justify this betrayal! This goes to show the SPP's opportunism and its continued adherence to the bankrupt Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution" and the building of "popular/democratic fronts."

There is also a group of former Trotskyists, the International Communist League (ICL) or Spartacist tendency, which claims to stand for U.S. and Philippines troops out of Mindanao. In its published statements (e.g., "U.S. Troops Out of the Philippines!" *Workers Vanguard*, 19 April 2002), the ICL has carefully skirted the issue of the Bangsamoro struggle for independence, while in discussions with RGK supporters ICL supporters argue that the Moro peoples do not have an independent identity and that they

are at most only "part of the kingdom of the Sultan of Borneo" and thus do not qualify as a nation. The Bangsamoro may not yet be a fully developed nation according to the criteria laid out by Stalin in his 1913 pamphlet on the national question, written under Lenin's tutelage, although they do have many national attributes (territory, economy and history, and the Moro languages are closely related). Lenin was a dialectical materialist who understood that there were myriad peoples, national minorities, nationalities and nations in the tsarist empire at various stages of social development, and he fought tenaciously for recognition of national rights in the Caucasus. So, we might ask the "learned" pedants of the ICL, were the Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Kazakhs and Turkmens of Soviet Central Asia fully fledged nations when they became union republics of the USSR, including the theoretical right of secession (although this was negated in practice by the Great Russian chauvinist Stalinist bureaucracy)?

If the national development of the Moros was arrested, this was in good part because of the extreme brutality of the occupation of Mindanao, Jolo and the other southern islands of the Philippine Archipelago by nascent U.S. imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century. The Moros had never been conquered by the Spanish. Their fierce resistance was overcome by the Americans only through massive slaughter at Cagayan, Agusan, Misamis and Bayan, culminating in the massacre of more than 900 Moros at the volcano of Bud Dajo in March 1906, which caused widespread revulsion in the United States itself. The new colonial masters undertook large-scale immigration of Christian Filipinos to swamp the Moros numerically, yet during U.S. colonial rule the southern regions were administered separately from the rest of the Philippines. Only with semi-colonial "independence" following World War II, were the islands "integrated" into the Philippines state, which drove the indigenous population further into the hills while turning over large swaths of Mindanao to plantations of U.S. corporations such as Firestone (rubber), Dole (pineapple) and the timber/paper giants Weyerhaeuser and Boise-Cascade. And now, for the past 30-plus years there has been an insurgency fighting for independence for the Bangsamoro.

In the Philippines, the ICL's erudite arguments are nothing but pseudo-Marxist excuses for capitulating to *Filipino nationalism*, both of the right and the "left," which is dead-set against secession of Mindanao and other southern islands. From the CPP to the ICL, the fake lefts side with the bourgeois Philippines state dominated by Luzon chauvinists. In contrast, the Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista stands for *proletarian internationalism*, which breaks through the straitjacket of the existing national states inherited from colonialism, making it possible for the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities to be realized in an emancipatory fashion, combating the reactionary programs of bourgeois nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, through a *socialist federation of Southeast Asia*.

The program of the pseudo-socialists including the formerly pro-Moscow Stalinists and Mao-Stalinists reflects their bankrupt program of collaboration with the "national"/"progressive"/"democratic" bourgeois "opposition" (i.e., that wing of the capitalists that is not currently in power) through the formation of popular or "democratic" fronts. This means the

subordination of the interests of the working class to the interests of the capitalist class. And because of their insatiable appetite for "alliances" with the out-of-power bourgeois factions, they set aside the interest not only of the working class, but also the interests of other oppressed groups and sectors. The defeats of 1965 and 1998 in Indonesia, and the "people's power" revolts of 1986 (EDSA 1) and 2001 (EDSA 2) in the Philippines, used by the military to oust worn-out regimes and replace them with more "popular" governments, illustrate the tragic balance sheet of popular frontism.

### **U.S. Imperialist Terrorism Against the Deformed Workers States**

Along with the support of warmongering U.S. imperialism to its puppet regimes like Indonesia and the Philippines, and following the "victorious" destruction and plunder of the Middle East (Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2002), Washington is pushing North Korea and China into the brink of war. The United States imperialists seek to force Pyongyang to abandon its deterrent nuclear arms program – if not, the U.S. will be "forced" to attack the bureaucratically deformed workers state, which has been relentlessly threatened by the bully Bush. And behind North Korea stands China. While Bush, Jr. ludicrously copies Clint Eastwood in defying North Korea to "make my day," the South Korean bourgeois puppet state of U.S. imperialism continuous to provoke military confrontations: the exchange of fire between South and North Korean navy boats, continual incursions into the territorial airspace of China and North Korea perpetrated by U.S. intelligence planes.

Last year, there was the new of the downing of a spy plane by the air force of China. This resulted in the death of the Chinese pilot of the MIG-29 plane just to cripple the U.S. spy plane and force it to land in China. Adding to this, the U.S. continues to pressure China and Cuba to "reform" their "human rights" record – by which they mean to give free rein to counterrevolutionary mercenaries on the U.S. payroll, starting with the Tibetan Dalai Lama. The burgeoning aggression, military provocation and the many-sided economic and political pressure on China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam by U.S. imperialism is aimed at bringing them down through capitalist counter-revolution. The intervention by the United States and its support of the aggression of the ruling class in Indonesia and the Philippines against national minorities is aimed at strengthening the states that support U.S. imperialism – support it needs in neutralizing rival imperialist powers in Asia and especially to menace the deformed workers states of China and North Korea.

The RGK and the LFI, as revolutionary Trotskyists unconditionally defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam from internal and external counter-revolutionary actions by imperialism and the capitalist elements inside these states, as well as pro-capitalist sectors of the bureaucracy. The Stalinist bureaucracy's policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism prepares the way for the destruction of the socialized centrally planned economy. The imperialists seek to resurrect the exploitative, oppressive and anarchic capitalist mode of production that has already caused untold poverty and sufferings for mankind, and which the Chinese, North Koreans,

Cubans and Vietnamese had driven out of their own countries. The threats, military provocations and other counter-revolutionary actions of imperialism, headed by the U.S., and the neighboring capitalist states, as well as the sabotage by capitalists from without and within, aim at bringing down these deformed workers states and bringing back the capitalist system.

We defend the right of the deformed workers states to possess any kind of weapons – including biological, chemical and nuclear arms – needed to defend themselves and act as a deterrent to the "weapons of mass destruction" that the imperialist countries possess in enormous quantities and are already aimed at them. We support the right of China and Vietnam to establish forward bases and military structures as a deterrent against the provocations of the imperialist countries and other bourgeois states. We likewise defend the stationing of Chinese and Vietnamese military troops and civilians in the Spratly Islands group as a countermeasure against the militarization and the deployment of civilians by other claimant countries including the Philippines. We support the suppression of capitalist "gusanos" in Cuba and the suppression of counter-revolutionaries in China, at the same time as we demand the immediate release of Chinese workers jailed for protesting against their deteriorating working conditions, the growing unemployment, the undermining of state industry and the inhuman exploitation in the growing capitalist sector. *For the Unconditional Defense of the Remaining Deformed Workers States!! Defeat the Provocations and Attacks by Imperialism and the Threat of Counterrevolution, Both External and Internal!!*

As part of our defense of the deformed workers states and their remaining revolutionary gains, we fight for *proletarian political revolutions* to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies that hold the levers of power in these countries. The Stalinists, who maintain themselves in power by abusing the name and the power of the working class, are parasites who seek to hold onto their privileged positions and do not fight to extend the socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist countries. The limitation of the revolution in their own countries has meant that, from their inception, the revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba have been bureaucratically deformed. By pretending to "build socialism in one country" (an utter impossibility as Marx himself underlined); by seeking treacherous "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists, and by encouraging their followers in other countries to form class-collaborationist "popular fronts" with local bourgeois forces, the Stalinists have hindered the working-class struggle for proletarian revolution. They have no right to rule the workers states, and must be ousted by the revolutionary proletariat before it is too late. In fact the Stalinists have opened the door to capitalist counterrevolution, as Trotsky insisted they would, and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states.

Rather than bringing back the bourgeoisie and all its horrors, including brutal exploitation and nationalist bloodletting as occurred in the capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and deformed workers states of East Europe, proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states would make it possible to realize the potential of the socialized, centrally planned economies which have been stifled by the dead hand of the

bureaucracy. A political revolution aims at booting the Stalinist parasites from power by the workers themselves. The bureaucracy will be replaced by genuine workers councils (soviets), that, the Stalinists have usurped from the very outset. A successful political revolution in China, N. Korea, Cuba and Vietnam will give a powerful creative impetus and institute workers democracy that the Stalinists have strangled through their monolithic control of life in these countries. This will also make possible an egalitarian armed power growing out of the revolutionary mass organs of workers power, replacing the enormous, stultifying apparatus of bureaucratic control that the Stalinists have relied on. In the end, a victorious political revolution must be extended the workers revolution to the capitalist countries, especially the imperialist countries. *To accomplish all this, the key is forging an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist communist party of the proletarian vanguard.*

### **The Need for a Genuine Revolutionary Leadership of the Working Class**

The vanguard role of the working class in fighting to defeat the attacks of U.S. imperialism and its local puppets on the various peoples of the Middle East, Southeast and East Asia, along with the urgent need to defend the deformed workers states and mobilize the workers to save them, requires a break with the poisonous program of class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie that is practiced by the opportunist labor leaders and the fake left. The working class must fight for its class political independence from the bourgeoisie and the pro-capitalist reformist leaders and fake left and for a revolutionary proletarian program. This urgent necessity makes all the more dangerous the opportunist politics of pseudo-Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists who surrender to pessimism about the revolutionary capacity of the working class. Beginning with isolated capitulations, this is soon generalized into betrayal and wholesale revision of the revolutionary program.

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista seeks to build the nucleus of a revolutionary internationalist workers party that can prepare itself to lead the working class in its struggle for proletarian revolution. A workers party that will stand as the tribune of the people, that will lead the struggles against the oppression of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. A party that steels its membership and leadership in class struggle against the bourgeoisie, not only in words but also in deeds. A revolutionary internationalist party that will fight for the victory of workers revolution, not just in one country, but also internationally. A Trotskyist fighting propaganda group can forge such a vanguard party through educating itself in Marxism and studying the history of the workers movement, as well as through participation in struggles of the exploited and oppressed that can serve as an example of its revolutionary program.

The Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista and the League for the Fourth International fight for the program of authentic Trotskyism against the defeatist program of class collaboration, pessimism and surrender to the bourgeoisie. We see as a model for workers revolution the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky. We fight to reforge the Fourth International founded by Trotsky in 1938, upholding the

validity of its Transitional Program and its central thesis: that the crisis of humanity is concentrated in the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. The struggles of the workers and oppressed of Asia can play a key role in resolving this crisis.

We appeal to the most class-conscious fighters, men and women, to join the RGK and LFI in our struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

Get in touch with the Rebolusyonaryong Grupo ng mga Komunista and the League for the Fourth International. E-mail us at: rgk7@hotmail.com or internationalistgroup@msn.com or visit the website: [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org).

REBOLUSYONARYONG GRUPO NG MGA KOMUNISTA  
September 2003

## **No Indian Troops to Iraq!**

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The Indian government says that Indian troops will go to Iraq to keep law and order, as a peacekeeping force. Actually, this is not so. At present, Iraq is nothing but a colony of U.S. imperialism. Whatever the name under which Indian troops go there, realistically they will be in Iraq as junior partners in maintaining occupied territory. Today the people of Iraq are fighting against the U.S. army, tomorrow they would start fighting against Indian troops. That fight against Indian troops would be correct and legitimate. Tomorrow as today, the Indian working class and laboring masses must express their solidarity with the struggling working class and labouring masses in Iraq against the U.S. military. Those Indian left parties who do not express solidarity with the struggling workers and labouring masses against Indian troops should be identified as the agents of the Indian bourgeois state and U.S. imperialism.

In part in the name of peacekeeping forces, Indian troops have gone to Sri Lanka, Congo and many other countries. In Sri Lanka, they fought in defense of the Sri Lankan government against the legitimate freedom movement of the Tamil people. The blood of the struggling Tamil people is on the hands of the Indian army. In Congo, the agents of the CIA captured and murdered nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba under the noses of the Indian troops, acting under the banners of the U.N. Hence, the Indian "peacekeeping force" was also guilty of the assassination of Lumumba. So both from the perspective of the current situation and based on past experience, it must be clearly understood that Indian troops will go to Iraq to fight against the legitimate Iraqi freedom movement. Thus the blood of the Iraqi workers and labouring masses will be on the hands of Indian troops.

Today the urgent task of Indian workers and labouring masses is to fight against this grotesque move of the Indian bourgeois state, the capitalist class and their political parties. A revolutionary movement must be built against sending Indian troops to Iraq. Such a movement should not be based on any petty-bourgeois demand ("Don't send our boys abroad") or pacifist thinking ("Not war but peace"). The workers and labouring masses must fight from the standpoint of strengthening anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle in the Middle East and Iraq. At the same time, they must fight to bring down the Indian bourgeois state. Only on this path is it possible to build an effective obstacle to the dispatch of Indian troops to Iraq. ■



# Longshore Union Official, Antiwar Protesters Face Jail After Oakland Cops Fire on Port Protest

## Defend Jack Heyman and the Oakland 25!

On November 7, twenty-four antiwar protesters and Jack Heyman, business agent of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), come up for trial in Oakland, California. The Oakland 25 were arrested during the brutal police riot against an antiwar demonstration at the East Bay docks April 7. On that day, an army of hundreds of cops fired directly at a crowd of 800 peaceful demonstrators and dozens of longshoremen using large wooden slugs and exploding "stinger" grenades. Scores were injured and five longshoremen and others went to the hospital (see "Oakland Cops Shoot at Longshore Workers And Antiwar Protesters," *The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003). In addition, police deliberately drove motorcycles into the protesters, running over some. Then they arrested dozens of their victims, and two and a half months later charged them with obstruction and failing to disperse! On October 20, a judge "demurred" at a lesser charge of disturbing the peace, but gave prosecutors ten days to re-file those charges and refused to dismiss the more serious ones.

*We demand that all charges be dropped against the Oakland 25! A protest rally has been scheduled for Friday, November 7, 1:30 p.m., at Alameda County Superior Court, 661 Washington Street (between 6th and 7th Streets) in Oakland. All opponents of imperialist war, defenders of democratic rights and the Bay Area workers movement should turn out in force to denounce this police frame-up.*

The vicious attack on the antiwar demonstrators and dock

**Jack Heyman (left) and other unionists at 5 October 2002 protest against lockout.**



Z/Indymedia

workers came at the height of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. It was, as we noted, "Imperialist War on the Home Front." This is what the 2001 U.S.A. Patriot Act, 2002 Homeland Security Act and the "Patriot II" act being pushed by "Justice" Department chief John Ashcroft add up to: *naked police-state repression*. Shortly afterwards, it was reported that the police colluded with officials of the shipping companies being picketed, American Presidential Lines (APL) and Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), to organize the cop assault. (APL ships munitions to Iraq, while the scabherders at SSA won a Defense Department contract to run Iraq's port of Umm Qasr.) Since April 7, it has been further revealed that the police onslaught was prepared by a slew of faxes, "alerts" and warnings from a California state anti-terrorism center, the San Francisco police special operations division and the Oakland police intelligence unit, all claiming that the protest would

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## Brutal April 7 Police Attack on Antiwar Protesters and Longshore Workers



**Cops on April 7 aim shotguns loaded with large wooden slugs (left), causing severe injuries (right). Police claim munitions were "non-lethal" but shells' marking says "death may result" if fired directly at people.**





## Imperialist War on the “Home Front”

# Cops Assault Rotterdam Dock Strikers

On September 29 more than 8,000 dock workers rallied in Rotterdam to protest the European Union's plans to introduce “self-handling” in European ports. The EU guidelines would allow ships' crews (which are increasingly non-unionized and low-paid) to carry out loading and unloading of cargo, taking jobs away from unionized longshoremen. This would particularly affect roll-on, roll-off cargo and car carriers. This and other schemes being floated (such as allowing new non-union “ports of convenience”) are clearly intended to bust the European dock unions, as the maritime bosses have succeeded in doing in Great Britain.

The demonstrators included union contingents from Britain, France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, and even from as far away as Romania, but the bulk were strikers from the Netherlands and Belgium. In the Belgian port of Antwerp alone, some 60 ships lay idle as a result. A parallel demonstration of 6,000 was held in Barcelona, uniting dockers from around the Mediterranean. In addition to the strike in Rotterdam, there was a solid one-day strike in all French ports (including in the French colony of Martinique), in Spain, Portugal, in Athens and in Cyprus.

The one-day strike and the demonstrations organized by the International Dockers' Council (IDC) gave a small taste of international proletarian power. The bosses' government responded by targeting the Rotterdam demonstration with a series of police provocations. Bloody attacks by the cops sent several workers to the hospital and several dozen to jail. The parallel to the brutal police assault on anti-war protesters and longshoremen at the Oakland, California docks in April of this year – at the height of the imperialist invasion of Iraq – is unmistakable. In the wake of the U.S./UK assault and the colonial occupation of Iraq, which has now been endorsed by the United Nations and the EU imperialists, the capitalists are declaring war on dock unions around the globe.

The League for the Fourth International (VVI in Dutch) distributed a leaflet at the demo in Dutch and English which reported on the Oakland attack and outlined a class-struggle answer to the Dutch bourgeoisie's current austerity drive. It also highlighted the united-front worker-immigrant demonstration at the Rotterdam docks initiated by the VVI last February calling for workers strikes against the war and for workers boycotts of war material.

All around the world port workers have been targeted as a serious potential obstacle to ongoing imperialist war. Our Dutch-language publication, *De Internationalist*, reported last January on the combination of NATO war preparations in Antwerp harbor and the anti-immigrant campaign being whipped up by the bourgeoisie. In response to the combative picket lines which shut down the docks there in June 2002, the Belgian social de-



Bas Czerwinski/AP

**Striking Belgian dock worker demonstrating in Rotterdam, Europe's largest port, during 24-hour port strike against EU plan to “liberalize” work rules in order to bust harbor unions.**

mocracy prepared repressive measures in the hopes of guaranteeing a smooth flow of war material for the imperialist butchers (see *The Internationalist* No. 15, January-February 2003). Even now the colonial occupiers of Iraq need the European ports for logistical support.

### Police Provocation

A comrade of the League for the Fourth International reported on the Rotterdam demo:

“The starting point of this protest parade of port workers from northern Europe under the slogan “Port work for port workers” was at the Zuidplein metro/bus station in Rotterdam-Zuid, the same spot from where our workers action against the war had assembled last February. This unmistakable mass of industrial workers – though safety helmets were forbidden (!) many wore their orange working clothes – with their trade-union banners also went through the same immigrant neighborhood, Tarwewijd (which has frequently been the target of anti-immigrant police raids), before passing underneath the river by the Maas tunnel on its way to the World Port Center.

“As did the local state authorities, everybody there had the recent Strasbourg protest on their minds, when 3,000 dock workers clashed with cops. And as expected early that morning, against the agreement reached with the FNV [the main Dutch union federation] and announced to all the strikers, the anti-riot cops showed up anyway and started to arrest a few workers in order to provoke a “vio-



**Police provocation: Dutch cops attack dockers at buses which brought demonstrators from several European countries.**

lent" response, consisting of beer bottles and "smoke bombs" (flares in use for harbor work), which the bourgeois press picked up to smear them as hooligans as vandals. Predictably today's bourgeois dailies reported in the business pages "Port Demonstration Turns Into Riot". "Upon arrival by bus from many European port cities, the dockers all registered as strikers with the FNV on the spot, even as mounted anti-riot cops were swinging billyclubs. Their political weight and sheer numbers – at between 7,000 and 8,000 strong – carried them onward toward the city center. "The rally itself was dominated by social-democratic hot air and treachery. First, there was a minute of silence for the recently deceased PvdA [Labor Party] mayor van Stekelenburg, of the working-class city of Tilburg. Although he was seen as a long-time trade-union militant of the 'socialist' kind, he instigated a racist anti-immigrant campaign following a murder there, as we noted in the latest issue of *De Internationalist*.

"The FNV representative for port workers in Rotterdam gave a militant-sounding speech, which mentioned the 24,000 portworkers on strike shutting down Rotterdam and other ports. He hinted that stronger measures by the workers may be necessary if the liberalization proposal before the European Parliament isn't repealed, but he neither announced or proposed any date for strike action. Super-patriotic "socialist" Jan Marijnissen of the Dutch Socialist Party offered the dockers "total support." While giving "international capital and their bootlickers" a tongue-lashing, what this came down to was a "threat" to have their members in the European parliament post questions and severely rap the Dutch minister on his knuckles!

"There was a big gap between the crowd of workers at the speakers podium and a bigger crowd of us at the entrance to the rally site. There the cops had the protest blocked off three rows deep with vans and a line of mounted police. One worker told me that undercover cops had again arrested some workers, so some bottles were flying in that direction.

Then an anti-riot cop standing on the second floor balcony of the office tower threw bottles at the workers below, which caused a stream of objects to crash on police vans, with the cops protecting themselves with their shields. At this frontline they charged us several times, I got smacked on the chest and brutally thrown up against one of the buses (which were all lined up along the wharf).

"There was determined resistance, but it was completely uncoordinated. The cops soon withdrew, afraid of being pelted from three sides if they ventured too far into the crowd. Still, they arrested some workers, 23 in total – claiming most were "violent foreigners" – while taking a few injuries themselves. After some more of these inconclusive clashes, with the Antwerp dockers in the front-line, busses started to leave."

### **For Proletarian Internationalism Against Protectionist Poison**

The League for the Fourth International calls for the immediate dropping of charges against all those arrested. In the immediate aftermath, the International Dockers Council declared that it "did not exclude" the organization of protest actions demanding their release, but these have not materialized. The day after the demonstration the European parliament approved the anti-worker "Port package." But the battle isn't over yet. And to win this fight, a program of proletarian internationalism is vital.

European port "liberalization" means a general assault on safety conditions on the docks, and not only because of the introduction of unskilled and therefore unqualified workers. In their insatiable drive for profits the international bourgeoisie seeks to play off workers in different ports against each other, as well as attempting to turn dockers against the largely unorganized seamen and other categories of workers.

Actions like that of September 29 are a token response by the deeply nationalist trade union bureaucrats. With slogans like "Proud to be a docker" and "Harbor work for harbor workers," the bureaucrats aim to separate waterside workers from the rest of their class, and even channel their anger against low-paid unorganized workers such as the seamen, who come largely from East Europe or semi-colonial "Third World" countries. A spokesman of the British private port operators, who are also threatened by the EU guidelines, tried to appeal to the unions by brandishing the spectre that "Filipinos could be driving cars around ports." This kind of disgusting chauvinism must be decisively smashed.

The workers' answer to the international bourgeois offensive must be internationalist to the core. Dock unions should organize the poorly paid seamen rather than buying the protectionist poison spewed by the bosses and bureaucrats. In resolutely opposing the EU "self-loading" regulation, defending the dockers' jobs and unions, the harbor workers should require that the crew of every ship that enters port be paid full union rates, or else that ship will not be loaded or unloaded. Likewise, ships with scab cargo should be boycotted, as the Spanish seaman did in refusing to handle cargo from Charleston, South Carolina, which was key in helping the ILA longshoremen win a contract. This



should be part of a fight for a single international maritime and waterfront union. The workers movement must also demand full citizenship rights for all immigrant workers and their families.

For decades the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) has campaigned against low-wage conditions in shipping. But its toothless protests will never ensure the unionization of the seamen internationally. A British docker with 35 years experience gave a warning at the Rotterdam protest that in Liverpool their numbers had dwindled from 12,000 to 70! The destruction of the union hiring hall in Liverpool was the result of the defeat of a long and bitter strike by the dock workers there. Around the world the Liverpool strikers received spontaneous support from workers on the waterfront, but ITF bureaucrats adamantly refused to organize international solidarity action.

The Rotterdam harbor action took place in the middle of workers' protests against the Dutch bourgeoisie's new austerity budget – protests in which transport workers, particularly bus drivers, were heavily involved. The FNV union tops limited these actions to strikes of a few hours, just as they made no connection between the dockers' struggle and that of other workers in the Netherlands. They have now accepted a wage freeze in the state sector for two years, a betrayal that may well be thrown back in their faces by the FNV membership.

Imperialist war, racist oppression and the bourgeoisie's attacks on living and working conditions require a class-struggle fight by the workers and oppressed. And the principal obstacle remains the reformist misleaders. Revolutionary leadership means making the links between imperialist war and the capitalist economic offensive against the workers. In contrast, Offensief, the Dutch branch of the social-democratic Committee for a Workers International, distributed a leaflet at Rotterdam which simply parroted the bureaucrats' slogans while complaining about privatization and liberalization and promising "socialism" in the sweet bye and bye. The leaflet was silent about the imperialist war and occupation of Iraq.

For their part, the demoralized centrists of the International Communist League produced a statement protesting the police assault in Rotterdam which, although it mentions Oakland in passing, draws no connection between the attacks on the dockers and imperialist war. This silence is no accident. Both the CWI and ICL explicitly refused to call for defeat of "their own" bourgeoisies in the war on Iraq, even trying to justify this shameful capitulation. In doing so, they reflect the social-chauvinist standpoint of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, which at most seeks to get a few crumbs for their (dues-paying) members in exchange for going along with imperialism's crimes (while sometimes mouthing verbal protests).

The League for the Fourth International has warned from the outset that imperialist war would be accompanied by stepped-up racist attacks against immigrants which pave the way for a general attack on the entire working class. We sought in Europe and the U.S. to mobilize workers action against the invasion of Iraq. This is part of our struggle for a Trotskyist leadership fighting to build revolutionary workers parties internationally. It will take a reformed Fourth International to lead the working class in the all-out class struggle that is urgently posed. ■

## Defend the Oakland 25...

*continued from page 36*

be "violent" and ordering up an arsenal of paramilitary weaponry to be used on demonstrators.

In the aftermath, the Oakland PD chief and liberal Democratic mayor Jerry Brown justified the police attack saying that they were responding to demonstrators throwing rocks and bolts at the cops. This is pure fiction: even police videotapes show no evidence of anything resembling that. The police claim they used "non-lethal" ammunition. After pictures were published showing demonstrators with welts the size of baseballs on faces, chests, backs and legs the authorities changed their euphemism to "less-than-lethal" ammo. But as everyone could see, if a couple of those shots had been an inch or two higher or lower, demonstrators would be dead. Moreover, every one of the "baton shells" fired was clearly labeled, "Do not fire directly at persons as serious injury or death may result." Video tapes and pictures show clearly that the cops shot directly at the protesters and workers, and their injuries are incontrovertible proof.

An account of the April 7 attack in the *Maritime Worker Monitor* (July 2003) detailed the "unprovoked, premeditated police attack." It noted, "Reportedly, police had targeted longshoremen," in part because ILWU Local 10 had taken stands against the U.S. war on Iraq. "In all 5 longshoremen were sent to the hospital with shot wounds. Some of the demonstrators had been hit by cops charging them on motorcycles. One of the demonstrators, June Brashares, while sitting in the paddy wagon after being arrested said in her statement: 'Over the police radio a voice ordered the motorcycle police to go forward and bump them'."

A *San Francisco Bay Guardian* (9 July) article on the OPD "Bump Squad" reported that while most police forces have abandoned this practice (sometimes, as in San Francisco, after being sued for damages), in Oakland driving cycles into crowds "to physically push people" is official policy, under Special Order No. 7088. Known as "BUMP" (for "Basic Use of Motorcycle Push") in cop talk, prior to ramming demonstrators at the Oakland port the police had driven their more than 1,000-lb Harley Davidsons into school kids marching against the war on Iraq on March 5. The OPD moto-cops on their Harley hogs resemble nothing so much as the Cossacks mounted on their horses who used to wade into workers demonstrations prior to the 1917 October Revolution that overthrew the tsarist empire.

The arrest of Jack Heyman came when he was driving to an SSA gate to warn longshoremen that union members were being shot by the police. According to the *Maritime Worker Monitor*: "They [the police] were in attack mode. Three cops dragged him [Heyman] out of his car, threw him face down on the street, beat and handcuffed him. Then they threw him in the paddy wagon without ever telling him why he had been arrested, despite repeated questioning." The police command center was set up in the intermodal rail yard, and SSA bosses could be seen there. The *San Francisco Chronicle* (8 April) reported: "Police said they moved in at the request of shipping company officials who wanted the protesters removed from

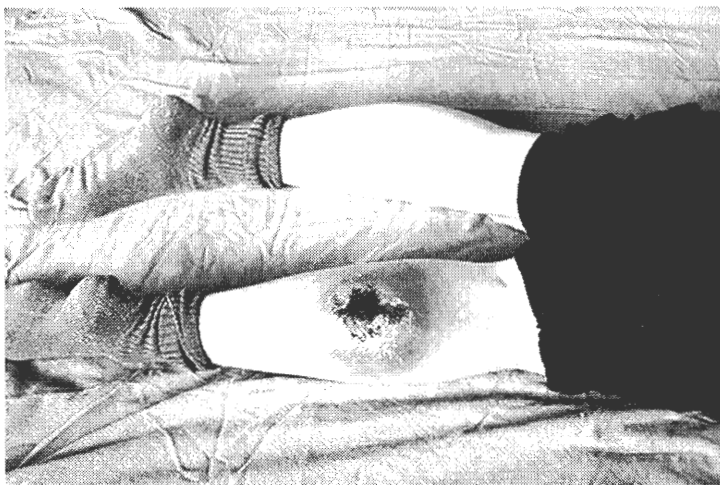
private property.” “Since when is the Port of Oakland private property?” asked the *Monitor*. Prisoners were not released until 1:30 a.m., 18 hours after being arrested.

West Coast dock workers have long been in the government’s crosshairs. They have been special targets since Washington began escalating its “war on terror,” using the 11 September 2001 indiscriminate attack on the NYC World Trade Center as a pretext for what is really a war for U.S. imperialist domination of the world. In the summer of 2002, “homeland security” czar Tom Ridge and Labor Department officials threatened ILWU officials that a port walk-out would be treated as a matter of “national security.” Particularly active in preparing the April 7 attack was the California Anti-Terrorism Information Center (CATIC), set up by Democratic governor Gray Davis right after 9/11. CATIC issued a bulletin on April 2 claiming that demonstrators might act violently because they vowed to “shut down the war merchants.” The bulletin left out that the protest organizers had stressed they did not intend civil disobedience or getting arrested.

The *Oakland Tribune* (18 May) reported that CATIC spokesman Mike Van Winkle equated protests with terrorism: “if you have a protest group protesting a war where the cause that’s being fought against is international terrorism, you might have terrorism at that.... You can almost argue that a protest against that is a terrorist act.” Van Winkle also said that “terrorism” could include “anything that is violent or has an economic impact, and shutting down a port certainly would have some economic impact. Terrorism isn’t just bombs going off and killing people.” By this definition, a dock strike could be labeled terrorist. And this was not just one official running off at the mouth, as the state attorney general Bill Lockyer tried to imply. According to the order founding CATIC, terrorism could include “any violation of criminal law...retaliating against or influencing the policy of government” (*Oakland Tribune*, 1 June).

This was a bit too frank for some of northern California’s liberal elected officials, so they lodged paper protests. After Lockyer said he would “investigate,” Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a star speaker at popular-front antiwar rallies, sent a “Dear Bill” letter to “applaud” his efforts to “address this issue,” signed “Barbara.” Another of those applauding Lockyer’s empty words was Democratic senator Diane Feinstein, who was one of the first to demand that the Taft-Hartley “slave labor law” be used to ban a dock strike last year. Various groups, including the ILWU International, called on the Oakland City Council to hold an “independent investigation,” which it voted to do, but then disbanded the committee after it met twice, because they didn’t want to provide evidence that could be used to sue the city for damages. Meanwhile, a “Port Safety and Security Plan for San Francisco Bay” being drafted by a committee led by the U.S. Coast Guard, now part of the Homeland Security Administration, listed “mass protesting of persons” and “civil disobedience” as tops on its list of security “threats” (*Oakland Tribune*, 29 June).

On June 26, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, the National Lawyers Guild and civil rights at-



Oakland Tribune

**Willow Rosenthal was hit on back of leg at April 7 Oakland port protest. Since then she has had to have two surgeries and two skin grafts.**

torneys announced a class action lawsuit, *Local 10 ILWU v. City of Oakland*, asking for an injunction against future police use of such tactics against demonstrators and damages for injuries in the April 7 attack. The plaintiffs are nine longshoremen and 31 antiwar protesters. One longshoreman was hit six times by police munitions. Many were hit in the back as they tried to escape the barrage. A demonstrator was run over by a motorcycle and shot repeatedly all over his body. One woman required surgery for the injury to her leg and will likely have permanent scarring and disfigurement. It is good that the police are being sued for their marauding, and the demonstrators and workers deserve every dime they can wring out of these “state terrorists.” But no flimsy court order, law or constitution will deter the capitalist authorities from violence when they think their class interests are at stake.

Several of the lawyers in this case were part of an earlier suit over the “Oakland Riders,” a gang of supposedly “rogue” cops who rode roughshod over West Oakland, routinely beating and terrorizing the black residents and planting drugs. In that case, the cops got off on criminal charges, but the lawyers settled a civil case with the city saying they thought Oakland was reforming its police. April 7 proved them wrong. And meanwhile, Jerry Brown’s cops continue to mete out racist terror against minorities, particularly black people, the same sort of atrocities that led to the formation of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Today, motorists are still pistol-whipped, heads are cracked with nightsticks, ribs broken, jaws dislocated, and many of the cops named in the Riders lawsuits are still part of the OPD (“Crime and No Punishment,” *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 8 October).

ACLU spokesman Alan Schlosser compared the April 7 Oakland port attack to the Birmingham, Alabama police attacking civil rights protesters in the 1960s and the Ohio National Guard firing on Kent State students protesting the war on Indochina in 1970. Schlosser complains that CATIC “equates peaceful protest with terrorism,” threatening First Amendment rights to freedom of speech. But interestingly, the ACLU only complains of insufficient regulation and vague guidelines, and

doesn't even raise the (utterly inadequate) call for disbanding this "anti-terror" outfit, even though CATIC has no legislative mandate whatsoever – it was set up by the Governor's decree under "emergency powers" after 9/11. The reason is that liberal civil libertarians share the basic class interests of the bourgeois state, including the sinister "war on terror," just as they went along with the red scare in the 1950s, refusing to defend the Communists at the height of the anti-Soviet Cold War.

CATIC harks back to the COINTELPRO "counter-intelligence" operations of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI in the 1960s and '70s, and to the McCarthyite witchhunters of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) a decade earlier. *The Homeland Security Administration is an "American Gestapo,"* serving the same basic function as the German Nazis' *Geheime Staatspolizei* (secret state police). HUAC was eventually abolished, COINTELPRO was formally (though not really) dissolved, yet "red squads," police spying and provocation continue. Revolutionaries warn that political police controls are an inherent part of capitalist rule, and the way to fight them is not through liberal schemes to "reform" the police, but by mobilizing the power of the working class in the streets. HUAC went after the ILWU with a vengeance, and the government repeatedly tried to deport union leader Harry Bridges as a "communist." But what stopped them was when hundreds of longshoremen (along with student demonstrators) stormed into HUAC hearings. That's what should happen here.

A longshore demonstrator's sign prophetically proclaimed: "War on Terror Is a War on Us." So true, and the response of a class-conscious workers movement must be to *defeat the bosses' terrorist "war on terror," defeat the imperialist invasion and colonial occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, and defeat the capitalist war on labor, oppressed minorities and immigrants on the home front.* This requires a fight to mobilize the power of the working class to enforce their rights against the imperialist warmongers and their bloody Cossacks. It requires a political fight to break workers and minorities from the capitalist Democrats, including liberals like Oakland mayor Brown and other local politicians, who pose as great friends of labor, oppose the war and vote motions against the U.S.A. Patriot Act (as the Oakland City Council did last December) while their cops use potentially deadly force against workers and demonstrators. It requires building a *revolutionary workers party* with a program of unflinching class struggle.

In justifying the April 7 cop assault, government authorities claimed demonstrators "were secretly in cahoots with the longshoremen's union – and, analysts believed, they were bent on shutting down the nation's fourth largest shipping port." Oakland police claimed "a collection of e-mails and Web postings by leaders of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and acquaintances in the anti-war movement" (how did they get those e-mails?) "suggest ILWU leaders planned to use the protests to demand arbitration at the port gates and delay going to work" (*Oakland Tribune*, 18 May). *The police responded with such extreme brutality not because they feared the spectre of "terrorism," but because they feared the very real prospect that the shipping of military cargo could be blocked.* In justifying

his actions, Oakland police chief Richard Wood said his "concern" was that "we would have been overwhelmed.... They could have taken over the whole port, and we did not want that to happen" (*Oakland Tribune*, 8 April). No, they did not want that to happen at the height of the invasion of Iraq, when it would have had a dramatic effect internationally and also a material impact on the war, and they were prepared to go to extreme lengths to stop it.

The Internationalist Group has called for workers strikes against the war and for transport workers to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) war material, as rail and port unions did in Scotland and Italy earlier this year. But while the ILWU has voted several resolutions against the war and police-state "security" laws like the Patriot Act, the union tops have consistently refused to undertake workers *action* and have gone out of their way to move war cargo. They may "dissent" but they don't dare to challenge the vital interests of U.S. imperialism, which they ultimately uphold. Several left groups which cover Bay Area longshore, including the Communist Party, International Socialist Organization, Workers World Party and the Spartacist League, also do not call for the dock workers to boycott military goods. (The once-Trotskyist SL used to raise this demand, but then abruptly dropped it during the West Coast port lockout last fall.) The fake-lefts and the ILWU tops joined in hailing Democrat Barbara Lee for opposing the war powers resolution against Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 (while covering up the fact that she voted for the war budget).

An April 10 protest letter from top officials of the ILWU noted that, "Our union was founded on the blood of workers shot and killed by police in 1934. We did not tolerate such actions and we certainly will not tolerate them now." In the 1934 strike, in addition to the longshoremen killed by the San Francisco cops on "Bloody Thursday," a striker in Seattle was killed by a "non-lethal" tear gas canister. The response of the docks union in 1934 was to shut down S.F. with a general strike. And today? On April 7, a Local 10 business agent told the press, "They shot my guys. We're not going to work today." *The port of Oakland and every West Coast port should have been shut down over this police atrocity.* But instead the ILWU tops ordered the longshoremen back to work in the name of the sanctity of the contract! This betrayal dangerously undercut defense of the union against this attack by the bosses and their government. Now, on November 7, there should be a mass outpouring of Bay Area labor at the courthouse and then march on the docks to picket the gates where the demonstrators and longshoremen were attacked seven months earlier. If thousands of unionists came out to shut it down, and not just a few hundred antiwar demonstrators, the outcome would be very different.

The cop atrocity on the Oakland docks will not be forgotten. As in 1934, the response must be to intensify the class struggle, not to rely on the bosses' courts. A revolutionary workers party must be built that can lead the struggle against imperialist wars, racist attacks and police-state terror by sweeping away the capitalist system that breeds these scourges, through international socialist revolution. ■



# Social Democrats No Answer to Capitalist Austerity

## Dutch Imperialist Robbers

### Join Plunder of Iraq

For the last two years, Dutch politics have been in constant turmoil (see "Imperialist War Fuels Racist Backlash in the Netherlands," *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002). The current coalition government headed by Christian Democratic leader Jan Peter Balkenende took office at the end of May 2003. A year earlier, the coalition of the social-democratic Labor Party (PvdA) and bourgeois parties (known as the "Purple" or "red-blue" coalition) was defeated in an election held days after the killing of notorious immigrant-basher Pim Fortuyn. This led to the formation of a right-wing cabinet ("Balkenende I") which was soon mired in squabbling and fell apart last October. In the parliamentary elections in January 2003, the Labor Party made big gains but fell short of a majority; after four months of negotiations the right-wing parties formed a reshuffled cabinet.

The following excerpted article is translated from *De Internationalist* No. 3 (September 2003), Dutch-language publication of the League for the Fourth International. The full text is available on our web site, [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org).

**SEPTEMBER 18** – The austerity program planned by the Balkenende II government represents a massive assault on the working class and oppressed. It is no accident that this ruling-class offensive runs parallel to the direct participation of Dutch Marines in the colonialist occupation of Iraq and to the continuing racist anti-immigrant campaign.

It's not just that we have experienced – up to now – a more or less one-sided class war with the result that tens of thousands of women and young people toil for less than the minimum wage (while sales of Bentley, Ferrari and Porsche luxury automobiles are booming). While Dutch supermarket operator Royal Ahold, the third-largest merchandising company in the world, piled up billions in fictitious profits, making it notorious as the "European Enron," Dutch workers have seen their social gains shredded.

The battering ram for this ruling-class assault on the whole



Dutch Marines deploy to Iraq aboard U.S. Chinook helicopters, July 2003. Nederlands Ministerie van Defensie

of the working class has been the stepped-up segregation and repression of immigrants, a campaign being waged in the name of a crusade against "terrorism". This is the face of imperialist war "at home." Thus working-class opposition to capitalist austerity must also mean opposition to both to imperialist war and anti-immigrant campaigns.

It's not just that millions are going to the Eurofighter (the jet fighter plane jointly produced by a consortium of European military-aerospace companies) while many elderly have no more than 200-300 euros a month for food. It's not a question of "wrong priorities," and there's no point complaining about how "anti-social" the second Balkenende coalition government is. This government, like the earlier "Purple" coalition, with or without the LPF, with or without the social-democrats, is only following the dictates of the Dutch bourgeoisie – a bourgeoisie that in its "Golden Age" subjected the workers to forced labor, under threat of drowning in the Amsterdam "Rasphuis."\*

Outrage against the government's austerity package is widespread, as are calls for trade-union action, including strikes, perhaps even national strikes. But the response of the multi-ethnic labor movement must not be limited to defending past social gains, modest as they were, which are now being ripped up. Instead, there must be a counteroffensive against capitalist austerity, in defense of fellow immigrant workers both legal and "illegal" – which must mean nothing less than *full citizenship rights* for all – and against the imperialist occupation of Iraq.

This is not to be accomplished by tacking on the call "troops out" to the laundry list of demands raised at the September 20 "*Keer het Tijd*" ["Turn the Tide"] demonstration, as pseudo-revolutionaries like Offensief (affiliated with Peter

\* In the late 16th century, the Dutch bourgeoisie sent the unemployed to a workhouse or debtor's prison called the Rasphuis, which included a "drowning cell" where those deemed incapable of working were reputedly drowned by opening a sluice gate.

Taaffe's Committee for a Workers International) and the International Socialists do. The organizers of this protest have set themselves the ultimately trivial task of removing the present cabinet. This can only mean putting the social democrats of the PvdA back in the driver's seat, perhaps together with various liberals, the openly pro-capitalist Green-Left party and the no less reformist and social-patriotic Socialistische Partij. And this only means more capitalist cutbacks under another color.

The working class has the social power not only to stop this capitalist assault in its tracks, but ultimately to expropriate the bourgeoisie and put an end to its system of economic crisis and imperialist war. But this means hard class struggle rallying all the oppressed to the side of the working class, not begging or pressuring (even in the form of a token one-day national strike) this or that bourgeois government.

**Only a revolutionary workers party armed with a Trotskyist program can lead a successful struggle against the bourgeoisie's offensive.**

Dutch imperialism was quick to jump on the U.S. chariot. This is best captured by the appointment of Philip Carroll, former head of Royal Dutch Shell in the United States to "advise" (i.e., dictate to) the Iraqi Oil Ministry – the "special relationship" to the U.S. is still very much a connection via Britain. Meanwhile KLM is already selling round-trip tickets from Baghdad... Thus Dutch Marines were dispatched to the Al-Muthanna region ultimately in order to ensure profits for the Dutch trusts.

In the parliamentary "debate" on June 26 over sending troops – which took place shortly after British imperialism lost six military police in one day – VVD [Liberal] and PvdA [Labor Party] deputies fretted about the risks the Marines would run, but they were reassured when war minister Henk Kamp told them that U.S. air support would be available within 15 minutes if there was "trouble."

While this was going on, a picket against the sending of troops was organized by the Iraqi Platform in the Netherlands, accompanied by a few Dutch leftists. The police in the Dutch capital, The Hague, first stopped the protesters from handing out leaflets to members of parliament and then simply banned the demonstration altogether, which had to merge with another demonstration protesting the government's housing policies. Even so, a member of Lawyers for Peace was arrested for the "crime" of leafleting.

Such is "democracy" in the Netherlands today. Basically, Iraqi refugees, who have no rights and are mostly targeted for deportation already, were an easy target. But where was the Dutch left? Neither the parliamentary rubber-stamping of the colonial occupation nor the actual departure of the troops provoked any significant mobilization. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets to protest the "American war," sowing illusions in the "pacifist" European imperialists, illusions reinforced by the fake left's denunciations of Bush and Blair. When "their own" imperialist bourgeoisie joins the colonial occupation of Iraq, these "peaceniks" barely utter a peep of protest.

**We Trotskyists, while politically combating Arab nationalism and all the Islamic currents, stand on the side of those in Iraq who seek to expel the imperialist occupiers from their land – by**

*any means necessary.* You can look everywhere in "revolutionary" newspapers like *De Socialist* or *Offensief* and you will find only the demand "troops out." Whose side are they on in this continuing war? These papier-mâché "revolutionaries" are unwilling and unable to call for the defeat of their "own" bourgeoisie. *In fact, if the colonialist occupiers are driven*

*out of Iraq it would be a victory for the workers and oppressed here. It is therefore necessary and urgent to mobilize here at home for this goal with the methods of the class struggle. Workers' strikes and boycotts of shipments of war materiel to Iraq are more than ever on the order of the day!*

When Dutch troops helped occupy Kabul as part of the imperialist war against Afghanistan, the war came home to the Netherlands. Racist "anti-Islamic" hysteria accompanied police state measures against refugees and immigrants. The electoral success of the racist populist Lijst Pym Fortuyn was an expression of this anti-immigrant war hysteria. This ideological tool of imperialism has a long tradition: almost a century ago, in a parliamentary debate about Dutch colonial atrocities against the population of Aceh in 1907, one deputy explained that "Islam is the greatest enemy of our politics and civilization throughout our colonies."

The pogrom atmosphere scapegoating immigrants that was whipped before and after the death of Fortuyn has served to guarantee popular consent to a barrage of police-state measures (while fascist elements are held in reserve). The arbitrary refusal of applications and deportation of refugees, raids against "illegal" immigrants, the legal/financial barriers put in the way of legal immigration have culminated in the first negative migration rate since 1984.

On August 6 Amsterdam cops gunned down a Moroccan man, Driss Arbib, leading to community protests calling for "an independent commission of inquiry". But such an organism would do nothing to stop the wave of state repression against immigrants. The power of the working class must be mobilized against such police atrocities, through demonstrations and strikes. This ultimately means the organization of worker/immigrant self-defense groups against racist terror. The capitalist offensive can never be successfully combated if the working class is hobbled by racial and ethnic divisions. **Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers and their families! ■**

Nummer 3, september 2003

€ 1,00

**De Internationalist***Imperialisten rot op!***Voor de nederlaag van de koloniale bezetting van Irak!**

De Nederlandse troepen in Irak zijn de laatste jaren steeds meer onderworpen aan de druk van de Amerikaanse imperialistische machtsverhoudingen. Dit is duidelijk te zien aan de manier waarop de Nederlandse troepen in Irak zijn ingezet. Ze worden gebruikt om de Amerikaanse imperialistische machtsverhoudingen te ondersteunen. Dit is een duidelijke afwijking van de Nederlandse politieke standpunten. De Nederlandse troepen in Irak zijn de laatste jaren steeds meer onderworpen aan de druk van de Amerikaanse imperialistische machtsverhoudingen. Dit is duidelijk te zien aan de manier waarop de Nederlandse troepen in Irak zijn ingezet. Ze worden gebruikt om de Amerikaanse imperialistische machtsverhoudingen te ondersteunen. Dit is een duidelijke afwijking van de Nederlandse politieke standpunten.

**Imperialistische barbarij op weg naar WO III**

# The Andes In Turmoil

**Indians and Workers Fed Up  
Sellout Leaders Impose IMF Measures, Then Resign**

## Ecuadorian Hotbed Seething

This is the first of two articles published in this issue of *The Internationalist* on the current turmoil in Ecuador and an analysis of the struggles of indigenous peoples in the Andean region. The full text of this article (excerpted here) is on our web site, [www.internationalist.org](http://www.internationalist.org).

The articles are translated from the July 2003 Spanish-language pamphlet, *Ecuador: Hervidero al borde del estallido*, part of the series *Cuadernos de El Internacionalista*, published by the League for the Fourth International (see ad page 53).

QUITO, August 8 – In a sharp new turn to the right, the government of Lucio Gutiérrez has broken with its ally, the Pachakutik\* party, the political vehicle of the majority of the indigenous peoples' movement in Ecuador, and is heading toward an alliance with the right-wing Social Christian Party (PSC). Pachakutik had boasted of its presence in the cabinet of former colonel Gutiérrez as supposed proof that this bourgeois government subservient to imperialism would favor the oppressed masses of the country. The president has gone out of his way to make clear he is ready to launch more repression and more attacks on the workers, peasants and Indians on the orders of the International Monetary Fund. In fact, the government has already struck hard against the oil workers, putting down their strike, jailing various union leaders and forcing others to seek cover from the wave of repression.

Lucio Gutiérrez' break with Pachakutik was preceded by the departure from the cabinet of the ministers of the Movimiento Popular Democrático (MPD), the electoral expression of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) of Ecuador (PCMLE), a party which has demonstrated to the hilt that Stalinism means reformism and class collaboration. Although today they put on a show of militancy, these reformists and the bourgeois Indian politicians helped Gutiérrez hoodwink the masses, impose anti-working-class measures of the IMF and



Dolores Ochoa/AP

**Workers protest privatization plans of Gutiérrez government, June 5.**

maintain the U.S. military presence at the Manta air base. Most of the international "left" aided them in this deception. Having used them up, the pro-imperialist military regime then tosses them aside like squeezed lemons. Now slogans are appearing on the walls, denouncing "*Lucio, sucio y traidor*" (Dirty Betrayer Lucio). But those who betrayed the working people were the ones who claimed that this government would be a friend of the oppressed. We Trotskyists, in contrast, always said the truth, that the popular-front-style "co-government" presided over by Gutiérrez would be nothing but the loyal administrator for the bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters.

### Colonel Gutiérrez In a Tight Spot

JULY 25 – Lucio Gutiérrez, the former coup-plotting colonel who was elected president of Ecuador in October 2002 after a demagogic campaign, began his administration by signing a "letter of intent" with the International Monetary Fund. Following the lead of the international bankers' cartel under orders from Washington, Gutiérrez abruptly raised the prices of fuel and medicine, hiked fares on public transport and electricity, and froze the wages of public employees. At the urging of the IMF, he also threatened to eliminate the subsidy on gas for household use, an explosive issue in Ecuador. These actions provoked anger among his allies on the reformist left and the indigenous peoples' move-

\* Pachakutik – Quechua for return, process of circulation and change.



ment, unleashing a series of protests by students, teachers and other sectors. By February, the Federation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador (CONAIE) and its political arm, the Multinational Unity Pachakutik-New Country (MUPP-NP, or Pachakutik for short) called on the president to change course, an ultimatum which the colonel scornfully dismissed (see "Ecuador: 'Colonel of Hunger' Imposes IMF Measures," *El Internacionalista* No. 3, May 2003).

Since then, the fissures in the government coalition have widened to the point of a split, currently underway, with the resignation of one "left-wing" minister after another. It began in mid-May when the 120,000 teachers of the National Union of Educators (UNE) went on strike. Finally, at the beginning of June, some 250 educators decided to undertake a hunger strike, along with various students and parents. Such an action, while expressive, is not based on mobilizing the strength of the working people but instead appeals to the "conscience" or the "sensitivity" of the capitalist rulers. However, just at that moment, the oil workers began their own strike, which quickly caused alarm and long lines of cars at the service stations. Faced with this show of strength, the government decided to yield to the teachers.

In retaliation, Gutiérrez unleashed furious attacks against the 4,000 oil workers, threatening to apply "the full rigor of the law" against them. He militarized the petroleum plants, threatened to decree a state of emergency, and vilified the leaders of the Ecuadorian Oil Workers Federation (FETRAPEC) headed by Diego Cano. From the presidential palace of Carondelet, he accused union leaders of being selfish, privileged and guilty of crimes against the fatherland "including terrorist sabotage affecting the integrity and wealth of the nation," for which he ordered their arrest (*La Hora*, 17 June).

The government coalition is lurching toward a definitive crash. In the last week, Education Minister Torres and two high officials, all members of Pachakutik, have resigned. Following a convention of the MPD at the beginning of July, its representatives in the government – headed by Environment Minister Edgar Isch, presidential advisor Carlos Ciro Guzmán and the governor of Bolívar province, Carlos Bonilla – presented their "irrevocable" resignations. However, these pseudo-leftists emphasize that they will not be a "belligerent opposition" to the government. They simply "declared political independence," which means "supporting measures which benefit the people, and opposing others," according to MPD deputy Luis Villacís (*La Hora*, 8 July).

These opportunist leftists continue to tie themselves in knots in order to justify their shameful political capitulation to Gutiérrez. The resolution of the MPD's convention begins: "The MPD supported the Patriotic Society/Pachakutik duo in hopes that it would carry out the changes desired by our people..." (*Rebelión*, 9 July). This hope was illusory from the outset, based on the idea that a capitalist government, whose core was a sector of the bourgeois armed forces, could defend the interests of the exploited and oppressed. "The government has given its blessing to a warmongering and aggressive policy," Isch asserted, adding that it had also begun "a process of persecution, firings, prosecution and jailing of some trade-union leaders." True enough, but at the time Isch was sitting in his ministerial chair. Continuing

on in the government "could be interpreted as giving our blessing to the unrestricted application of the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund," says the resolution. What it doesn't say, is that from its very first day the government has carried out "without restriction" the orders of the IMF. *As members of the "co-government" with Gutiérrez, the MPD and the PCMLE are co-responsible for these attacks against the working people.*

While the Stalinist illusion-mongers keep trying to justify their alliance with an imaginary "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie, other leftists speak of Gutiérrez' "betrayal" of the program of his election campaign. However, the "rebel" colonel was already flaunting his subservience to the dictates of the White House and Wall Street after his success in the first round of the elections, when he traveled to the United States to receive the blessing of Yankee imperialism. At the time of Gutiérrez' inauguration as president, we Trotskyists emphasized in the paper of our Brazilian section:

"The League for the Fourth International warns that this bourgeois populist in olive green is no 'red'; he will run the Andean country in favor of the rich and powerful, dutifully implementing the starvation policies of the International Monetary Fund and other 'multinational' institutions that take their orders from Washington."

—*Vanguardia Operária* No. 7, January-February 2003

In fact, as we wrote two years earlier, Colonel Gutiérrez already complied with the "mandate" of the State Department and Pentagon at the decisive moment of the 21 January 2000 "Indian uprising," when he resigned from the civic-military junta in order to make way for General Carlos Mendoza, who then passed the leadership baton to Vice President Gustavo Noboa, who imposed the dollarization against which the workers and Indians had risen up. After quoting a call from the PCMLE for the formation of a "Patriotic Government of National Unity," we commented:

"This fantasy of an alliance with 'democratic' officers is the perfect expression of the bankruptcy of the Stalinist program of 'two-stage' revolution. The 'democratic anti-imperialist' stage means handing over the peasants and Indians to their civic-military executioners."

—"New Ecuadorian Government, Made in U.S.A.," *The Internationalist* No. 8 (June 2000)

In the title of this leaflet, we summed up: "Alliances with Bourgeois and Military Figures = Defeat for the Exploited."

### **The Indian Movement On the Verge of a Split**

The acute contradictions between the pretensions of Pachakutik and the CONAIE to represent the interests of the indigenous masses of Ecuador, on the one hand, and on the other, the policies of the capitalist government headed by Gutiérrez, which would not have been elected without their backing and in which they have ministerial responsibilities, has led the Indian movement to the verge of a split. In addition to the tensions already mentioned between the president and his electoral allies, one must add the scandal unleashed by the revelation of the transfer of the trusteeship over the bankrupt Ecuadorian Electrical Company (EMELEC) from jailed former banker Fernando

*continued on page 54*

# Marxism and the Indian Question in Ecuador

The following article is translated from the July 2003 pamphlet, *Ecuador: Hervidero al borde del estallido* (Ecuadorian Hotbed Seething), part of the series Cuadernos de El Internacionalista published by the League for the Fourth International.

The history of more than a decade of Ecuadorian “uprisings” shows that, in each instance, the indigenous peoples\* acted as a militant sector of a cause involving workers, peasants and all working people in the country. In the June 1990 Indian rebellion, for example, non-Indian peasants asked the CONAIE (National

Confederation of the Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador) to take up their demands. The indigenous uprising of January 2000 was set off by the dollarization of the economy, a measure which affected everyone. With equal regularity, the indigenous leaders have stabbed these struggles in the back on behalf of an ill-fated “alliance” with some sector of the “powerful,” whether they are dressed in olive green or in a suit and tie. The actions by Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez should not be surprising; like General Mendoza, as a representative of the armed institution of the bourgeoisie, he follows the orders of his superiors in Washington and Wall Street. The actions of Miguel Lluco or Nina Pacari of Pachakutik (the political arm of the CONAIE) were also predictable, as they are representatives not of the Indian masses in whose name they speak but of a well-to-do layer which wants to serve as *caciques* (indigenous chiefs, or political bosses) for the masters of the empire.

Even some sectors of the left have built up a myth around Pachakutik and the CONAIE, making them out to be a kind of South American Zapatistas. Thus the Fracción Trotskista (FT), a current led by the Argentine Partido de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS – Socialist Workers Party), compared “the

\*In this article, “indigenous peoples” and “Indians” have been used interchangeably.



Silvia Izquierdo/AP

Indian women in the front lines of the January 2000 uprising. The working masses and Indians were betrayed by their reformist and bourgeois leaders.

emergence of the Indian movement” in Ecuador with “the eruption of the Zapatista Indian peasants, the democratic movement under Indian hegemony in Guatemala, the struggle against the multinationals and the government by the Mapuches of southern Chile, [and] the mobilizations of Indian peasants in Bolivia.” They only add the proviso, as a fig leaf of feigned Marxist orthodoxy, “over and above the limitations expressed by their political leaderships.” Hailing the indigenous movement is the latest fashion for petty-bourgeois “anti-globalizers” and “post-modern” anti-Marxists. They enthuse over the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) of Subcomandante Marcos in Mexico precisely because it says that it is not fighting for power. With all their talk of “participatory democracy” (to approve budgets cutting back social programs!), they are seeking a deal with the capitalist state. For these fake leftists, it is their means of propagating the imperialist lie about the “death of communism” following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union.

But Pachakutik is far from being an EZLN South. In Mexican terms, according to the economic interests it defends, it would be closer to the El Barzón movement of small capitalist farmers; its “ethnic-centered” vision of the Indian question reflects the same class standpoint. These are not the “red ponchos” that the Ecua-



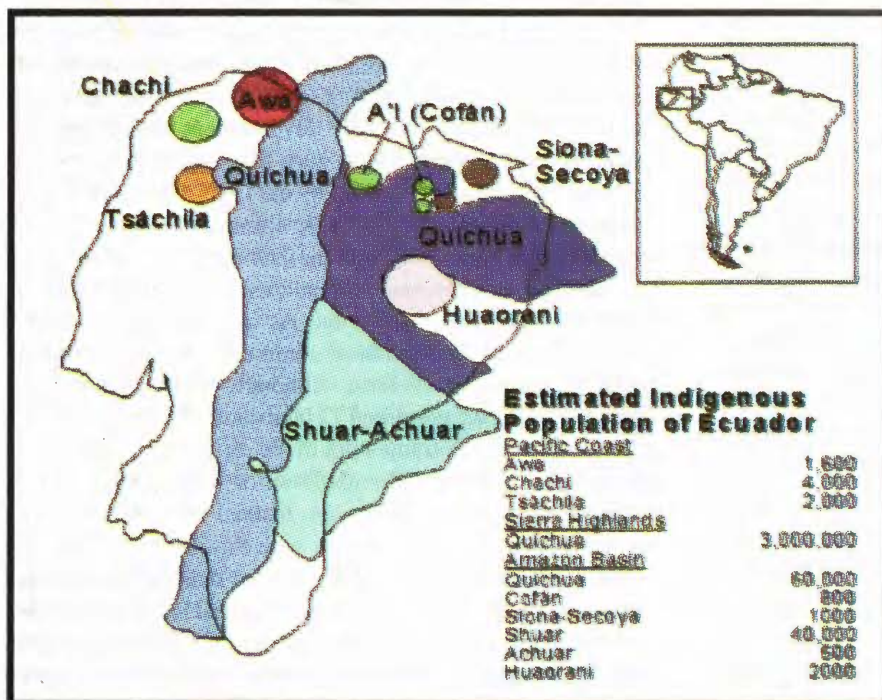


**A congress of Ecuarunari, the organization of the Kichwa indigenous peoples of Ecuador, in June. The Kichwas are an oppressed nationality whose liberation will be the work of the socialist revolution of all the workers and oppressed.**

dorian generals and large landowners feared so much in the 1990 rebellion; these Indian bureaucrats and bourgeois are instead "golden ponchos," who with their "plurinational" discourse are trying to negotiate their entry into the ruling class. They are following the lead of the Revolutionary Tupac Katari Liberation Movement (MRTK-L) in Bolivia, a parliamentary party which is in no way revolutionary and which for more than a decade has been allied with the governments of the day, first the bourgeois Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) followed by mili-

called) and the Comunero insurrection in Nueva Granada (Colombia) in 1781. In 1784, the Indians of the village of Calpi, near Riobamba, rose up against the *mita* (forced labor), and blocked the sending of a dozen *mitayos* (Indians subject to the *mita*) to a silver mine. These uprisings, precursors to the struggle for independence by local elites, were a mortal threat both to the colonial empire and to the *gamonales* (large landowners) who would later dominate the bourgeois republics. During the republican period, the indigenous uprising of 1871 in the province of Chimborazo, led by Fernando Daquilema, opposed obligatory tithes, tribute, forced labor and whipping; because of this Daquilema was shot by the dictatorship of García Moreno.

In the first decades of the 20th century, Indians also played a vanguard role in the struggles of the Ecuadorian working people. In the founding conference of the Ecuadorian Socialist Party (May 1926), which in 1931 became the Communist Party, indigenous leader Jesús Gualavisí from the canton of Cayambe participated as a delegate of the Peasant Workers Union of Juan Montalvo. The union fought in defense of communal lands and against the abuses and unpaid labor imposed by the landowners. In February 1926, unarmed peasants were attacked by 70 soldiers from the army with machine guns; in November of that year, there were reports of peasant "aggression" against the local police accompanied by cries of "Long





live socialism!" In 1930-31, there was a peasant strike in Cayambe demanding a 40-hour workweek, return of lands stolen by the landowners, an end to the abusive tithes and other church taxes, payment for women's labor and an end to the practice of *huasicama* (personal service in the "big house" of the hacienda). The response of the government was to send 150 soldiers with bloodhounds to hunt down the Indian peasant rebels. Nevertheless, at the beginning of January 1931, an agreement was reached that favored the strikers. When the latter convoked a First Congress of Peasant Organizations to be held in February, the meeting was banned and the socialist leaders were jailed.

### The Church and the "Ethnic-Centered" Orientation of the Indigenous Movement

More recently, the leadership of the indigenous movement has remained in the hands of anti-Marxist elements. An American researcher, Chad Black, wrote in his monograph, "The Making of an Indigenous Movement" (May 1999): "Indigenous regional organizing began in the 1970s as a reaction against Marxist, mestizo, integrationist leadership, conservative reaction to traditional leftist organizations, and increasing pressures placed on indigenous communities through Ecuador's enhanced position in the capitalist world-economy." Black reiterates over and over how the "identity politics" of the new movements are distinct from Marxism and the rhetoric of class used by their predecessors. The role of the Church has been fundamental in this, always anti-communist but not always with the same political content. Following the "agrarian reform" of 1964, the military preferred dealing with the National Federation of Peasant Organizations (FENOC, today FENOCIN) rather than the Communist-affiliated Ecuadorian Indian Federation (FEI). FENOC originated in a current under the tutelage of Catholic intellectuals linked to the Conservative Party; at the end of the 1960s, reflecting recent papal encyclicals, it passed into the hands of the Christian Democracy; and in the mid-1970s, under the influence of the 1968 Latin American Bishops Conference in Medellín (CELAM) and Liberation Theology, it proclaimed itself socialist.

In the eastern part of the country, a Federation of Shuar Centers was established, orchestrated by Salesian missionaries supported by the Social Welfare Ministry, with a perspective of opposition to state hegemony, protection of Indian culture and territories, and bilingual education. Similar groups were founded among the other Amazonian peoples (Kichwa\*\*, Siona, Cofán, Huaorani), but they soon confronted the massive penetration of the oil companies, the army, right-wing protestant missionaries and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a vehicle for the infiltration of U.S. intelligence agencies in the region. Among the Kichwas of the Sierra (the mountain highlands), the founding of Ecuarrunari in 1972 was accompanied by a hard ideological struggle in which, under Church pressure, the partisans of a "purely Indian" (i.e., not class) organization prevailed. Ecuarrunari was declared an ecclesiastical organization, with a priest put in charge

of overseeing it. At the end of the 1970s, there was a turn toward a more cultural agenda. It was under the domination of Ecuarrunari that CONAIE was founded in 1986 as the umbrella organization of indigenous peoples in the country. Its demands included participation in public administration, creation of an Indian bank, official recognition of indigenous languages and bilingual education, preservation of traditional medicine, and an obligatory reference to returning lands to the indigenous communities. These demands are far from radical, much less revolutionary.

Nevertheless, the founding of the CONAIE was a milestone in the growing combativeness of the indigenous peoples in response to brutal repression by the conservative government of Febres Cordero and the landowners. In the 1980s there were several cases of landowners' security forces burning down homes, torturing and killing Indian leaders. The resistance culminated in the Indian uprising of June 1990, when some 200 activists occupied the Cathedral of Santo Domingo in Quito, a symbol of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the Dominican friar known as protector of the Indians. In a matter of a few days, Indians from all over the country joined the uprising. The highlands were paralyzed by blockades on the Pan-American Highway. In the province of Chimborazo, 30 police and soldiers were taken hostage. The military tops denounced a communist plot; armored helicopters fired on the crowds, and an Indian leader died in a confrontation with the army. Hacienda lands were seized everywhere. The uprising caused a great uproar, dramatically refuting the racist image of the "docile and submissive Indian." But its demands were quite modest, and the indigenous leaders (led by Luis Macas, currently minister of agriculture) called it off after only ten days, leaving the church and taking down the highway blockades. In discussions held under the aegis of the archbishop of Quito, CONAIE presented a list of 16 points, which far from being directed against the capitalist system instead sought to become part of it.

Among the 16 points were demands for the proclamation of Ecuador as a "plurinational state"; the reorganization of the agrarian reform agency IERAC to solve water and land problems; forgiving debts to state development banks; non-payment of rural property taxes; duty-free import and export of commercial and artisan goods by the CONAIE; control of archaeological sites by the CONAIE; elimination of parallel state organizations competing with the CONAIE; provision of budget allocations to Indian nationalities; permanent funding of bilingual education, and so on. As one can see, this list of demands is not the agenda of communist insurrectionists or even of a peasant rebellion. Although, under peasant pressure, the CONAIE presented 72 land conflicts, these were specific disputes in the framework of the official agrarian reform. They did not demand the abolition of large estates and the expropriation of the haciendas; instead they sought to improve their bargaining position with the IERAC. Their economic demands were those of small or medium landowners, agrarian capitalists, who sought low-interest loans, lower taxes, elimination of import-export duties, etc. They asked for funds, official recognition and a share of bureaucratic positions. Most significantly, despite an initial wave of official repression, many

\*\*In this article, "Kichwa" refers to the indigenous people derived from the Inca empire, according to the usage of the Ecuadorian Indian movement; "Quechua" is used for their language.

of these demands were granted over the space of a few years.

While the Borja government made some concessions to the Indians, his successor as president, Sixto Durán, adopted an attitude of extreme hostility toward them. In June 1993, as 2,000 peasants and Indians were marching on the National Congress to oppose a new "agrarian reform" law that blatantly favored agrobusiness, they were met by the police with tear gas and beatings. Once again there was a wave of houses burned down, farm animals stolen, Indians forced to abandon their lands, and association members tortured and killed. In the course of two years, there were at least 14 deaths due to land-owner violence, as well as rapes of women by "security guards." In the face of this bloodbath, it was urgently necessary to organize Indian, peasant and workers self-defense against the bosses' thugs. The response of the reformists and the leaders of the newborn Indian party, Pachakuti, however, was to seek candidates for upcoming presidential elections and to launch a campaign to ... amend the constitution to be more inclusive of Indians. The predictable failure of these steps led to new uprisings, in 1997 against Bucaram and in January 2000 against Mahuad, but there was no change of government policy.

### Mariátegui, the Communists and the Indians

From their very beginnings, the Communist parties of Latin America sought to orient themselves on the Indian question, which was intimately tied to peasant struggles. However, they did not manage to work out a coherent policy on the issue. It should be noted in this respect, that due to the fact that the Communist International only began systematic work in the hemisphere in the mid-1920s, almost all the Latin American CPs were born under the sign of Stalinism, with its conservative-nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country." This negation of the CI program under Lenin and Trotsky, when it called for international socialist revolution, had as a corollary the opportunist scheme of "two-stage revolution." According to this prescription, peasants are called upon to play a key role as the protagonists of ... a bourgeois-democratic (i.e., *capitalist*) "revolution" against a supposed feudal or semi-feudal regime. A "Resolution on the Peasant Question in Latin America" called for "giv[ing] a predominantly *agrarian content* to the bourgeois-democratic revolution" (*Correspondencia Sudamericana*, August 1929). Later, when the CI passed from centrism to open reformism in the mid-1930s, they called for a struggle for *agrarian reform* in a capitalist framework, instead of fighting for *agrarian revolution* as part of the socialist revolution.

At the First Latin American Communist Conference in June 1929, there was an extensive discussion of the "problem of the races in Latin America," which dealt with the Indian and black question. But there was no agreement on a resolution, and the draft theses which were subsequently published had two counterposed action resolutions, which differed over whether one should even mention "the struggle of the Indians for laying claim to their status as an oppressed nationality" (*Correspondencia Sudamericana*, August 1929). The author of the report to the conference of the Latin American CPs was



Indian leader Jesús Gualavisí (left), founder of the peasant union of Cayambe and of the Communist Party, together with two other Communist leaders, Dolores Cuacuango and Amadeo Alba.

the Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui, the most important Latin American theoretician of the CI, who died the following year. In the report he strongly denounced the oppression of the indigenous peoples, noting: "There is also an attempt to justify the exploitation of Indians in Latin America with the pretext that this is aiding the moral and cultural redemption of the oppressed races." He pointed out that during the Conquest, the invaders "rapidly proceeded to chain the consciousness, at the same time as they enslaved the bodies. This enormously facilitated their economic subjugation, the main aim of the Catholic subjects."

Mariátegui rightly insisted, "It is essential to give the movement of the Indian or black proletariat, both agricultural and industrial, a clear class-struggle character." However, he systematically minimized the extent of racist discrimination against blacks, to the point of saying: "Derived from their economic role and social conditions is the fact that in Latin America in general the black problem does not have a pronounced racial aspect." He also wrongly claimed that "as concerns the two races, the purely racial aspect of the problem is also greatly diminished due to the important proportion of mestizos" (South American Secretariat of the Communist International, *El*



**Contingent of the Movimiento Revolucionario de los Trabajadores in 1978 May Day march. The MRT had considerable influence in FENOC when the latter declared itself “socialist” in the 1970s.**

*movimiento revolucionario latino americano* [1929]).

The incipient Latin American Communist parties of that period were in the throes of a bitter struggle against the petty-bourgeois nationalist current of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA). APRA *caudillo* Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre used pseudo-Marxist language to peddle his demagoguery about an “Indo-American” revolution. In its effort to attack APRA’s Indo-nationalism, the 1929 conference report stated:

“The indigenous problem, in most cases, is identified with the land problem. The ignorance, backwardness and poverty of the Indians are merely the result of their servitude. The feudal *latifundio* [large landholding] maintains the exploitation and absolute domination of the indigenous masses by the propertied class. The struggle of the Indians against the *gamonales* [landowners] is invariably based on defense of their lands against absorption and looting. There thus exists a deep and instinctive Indian demand: the demand for land.”

In his famous book, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928), Mariátegui insists that “The Indian question begins with our economy. It has its roots in the land property system.” This is correct, and constitutes the point of departure for a Marxist analysis. But Mariátegui goes further in categorically rejecting “the assumption that the Indian problem is an ethnic problem.” He sums up the contribution of Marxism in the phrase: “The new approach consists of looking for the Indian problem in the land problem.” By reducing the question of the indigenous peoples to that of land, he equates it with the peasant question and thus takes away its specific features.

In other text, his introduction to the book by Luis Valcárcel, *Tempest in the Andes*, Mariátegui becomes lyrical, writing that, “It is the myth, the idea of socialist revolution” that “raises the soul of the Indian.” He goes so far as to state that “the Inca people...built the most developed communist system,” basing this opinion on the peasant community, the *ayllu*. Yet these communities were not a creation of the Inca, but rather a vestige of the ancient tribal mode of production which prevailed among the

peoples conquered by the Incas. And while this community – which did not recognize private property in land but only the distribution of parcels to members of the community for their use – could have served as a bridge to the socialization of agriculture, as Marx suggested of the Russian peasant village, the *mir*, the persistence of the *ayllu* is explained in part by the fact that it served Tawantinsuyo (the Inca empire), Spanish colonialism and Republican *latifundistas* as a means of extracting tribute from their indigenous subjects.

For many years, Mariátegui was out of favor with the Stalinist high priests in Moscow, who considered him a populist. But they, too, from their reformist viewpoint, fully identified the Indian with the peasant. They summed up their program for the countryside in the struggle for agrarian reform. This was the case of the Ecuadorian Indian Federation (FEI), formally founded in 1944 just as

the PCE was handing power to the popular-front government of José María Velasco Ibarra. They combined these “democratic” demands with an *indigenista* policy which sought to assimilate the Indians into the bourgeois white-mestizo society, at most keeping a folkloric veneer. This was the objective of the First Inter-American *Indigenista* Congress called by Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas in 1940 and held in the Indian community of Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. But not only the Stalinists with their popular fronts reduced the Indian question to land tenure. In an article titled, “The Class Struggle and the Indigenous Problem,” in the magazine *Clave* No. 2 (November 1938), published by the Pan-American Secretariat of the Fourth International, Diego Rivera, shortly before his break with Trotsky’s FI, summed up: “The Indians, as the most backward part of the population, suffer the most. On that terrain, the solution to the so-called Indian question means a struggle for agrarian revolution.” In this case, he posed the need for workers revolution, but he ignores specific demands concerning the oppression of the indigenous peoples.

### **Workers Revolution Throughout Ecuador Will Have an Indian Character**

The Indian question in Latin America is a case of special oppression (as are the black question and the woman question), in this case concerning the descendants of the native peoples who populated the American continent prior to the arrival of the European colonizers. Following independence, the rulers of the bourgeois republics kept the colonized population in a condition of servitude, both on the large haciendas and in the so-called “free” Indian communes. The great mass of the indigenous population suffered and continues to suffer both oppression of an ethnic-racial character and ferocious economic exploitation as peasants. Following the formal abolition of servitude (in the Ecuadorian case, quite recently), it continues to be a subjugated population. *This oppression is rooted in the capitalist mode of production and cannot be eliminated without a socialist revolution which overthrows the bourgeois ruling class.* But it is not limited to economic



exploitation: it includes different forms of subjugation – linguistic prohibitions, the denial of democratic rights, systematic social discrimination, etc. It does not have the same exact characteristics from one country to another: the situation in Ecuador, where the indigenous population is calculated at between 35 and 40 percent of the total, and Mexico, where it is 10 percent of the total population, is not the same. Even within a country it is not identical: the situation of the Amazonian Indians in Ecuador differs in important aspects from that of the Indians of the Sierra.

Many bourgeois analysts speak of the indigenous peoples as if they were a typical case of an oppressed nation, or a colony. This is the thesis of Rodolfo Stavenhagen, who considers Indians to be an “internal colony.” The pseudo-Trotskyist Fracción Trotskista (FT/PTS) also speaks of the Indian question in Ecuador as “the land problem and national oppression,” or more succinctly, “the Indian national question.” From the fact that the CONAIE calls for a “plurinational state,” the FT deduces that “the Indian movement consists of a conglomeration of oppressed nationalities.” Following this line of argument, they call for “the right of self-determination of the Indian peoples/nations.” What does the demand for self-determination mean in this case? Polemicizing against Rosa Luxemburg, who ironically asked what that term could mean, Lenin wrote in his 1914 pamphlet, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, that “the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.” Does this mean that the FT is calling for the independence of Indian nations in Ecuador. It does not say so directly, but this is the logic of their presentation. From this standpoint, they foresee a separate, if not directly separatist, struggle of the Ecuadorian Indians (and of Afro-Ecuadorians).

Today, many bourgeois academics (and some pseudo-Marxists like Michael Löwy and Eric Hobsbawm) have adopted an entirely idealist definition of a nation, as an “imagined community of men and women,” or equivalent terms. Thus it depends exclusively on the self-consciousness of the members of the nation. Marxist criteria, in contrast, are based on a materialist analysis. According to the Bolsheviks, a nation consists of a stable and historically formed community on the basis of a community of language, territory, economy and culture. The nation-state is characteristic of the capitalist mode of production, and is the preferred framework for the domination of the national bourgeoisies. In the case of the Indian peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon region, the Shuar and Huaorani, and even smaller tribes like the Cofán and Secoya, these are clearly pre-national peoples in which the tribal mode of production continues to prevail (despite substantial intrusions of the capitalist economy, above all due to the arrival of the oil and lumbering companies and the army). The Quechua-speaking peoples of the highlands, on the other hand, have some characteristics of a nation (common language and culture), but because of their territorial location, distributed in communities throughout the country’s central zone, and their increasing participation in Ecuador’s national economy, they do not constitute a

nation but more exactly an oppressed nationality.

In reality, within the Kichwa nationality there are multiple Quechua-speaking peoples, reflecting the fact that the various Indian domains in the Quito region were only partially conquered by Tawantinsuyo, and that only occurred a few years prior to the Spanish conquest. This explains in part the multiplicity of indigenous organizations in the Sierra. The territorial and economic aspects are more important. During the first decades of the 20th century, it might have been possible to carve out a Quechua nation in the Andean areas of Peru, where semifeudal haciendas and Indian communities producing primarily for their own consumption prevailed, and which was quite isolated from the predominantly white and mestizo coastal areas. But what would self-determination mean for a Kichwa nation in Ecuador today when Indians constitute a majority of the population of the highlands and the overwhelming majority in the countryside and small towns, and when they supply the urban areas with their agricultural produce, which is primarily market-oriented? It would have to be a “nation” of the entire Sierra, and its “independence” would in fact mean the separation of the Pacific Coast region. In effect, it would realize the reactionary dream of the most retrograde bankers and businessmen of Guayaquil!

In the case of Russia, which held a hundred oppressed peoples, nationalities and nations under its jackboot, the Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Trotsky made great efforts to find flexible forms to carry out their promise to liberate the inmates of the prison house of oppressed nations and peoples which was the tsarist empire. In the case of the great (and some small) nations of the Western zone, they recognized the right of self-determination – that is, of independence – even if it was under bourgeois rule. Finland, Poland and the Baltic states separated under bourgeois rule, while Ukraine and Byelorussia remained within the federation, as republics of what later became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Subsequently (and following a struggle against the Georgian-born Great Russian chauvinist, Stalin), the nations of the Caucasus and the Muslim nationalities of Central Asia also become republics of the USSR. For the less developed nationalities (such as the Tatars, Kalmyks, Daghestanis, Mongol-Buryatis) they created “associated soviet republics” which enjoyed territorial autonomy within the union republics. For pre-national peoples there were autonomous *rayons* (districts) and even cantons. This initially made possible a considerable cultural flowering, although it was ultimately suffocated by the crushing weight of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In a country such as Ecuador, where servitude in the form of *huasipungo* and *huasicama* was formally abolished as late as 1964, there are pre-national peoples at different levels of development. But fundamentally, the liberation of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador is not a question of forming another independent state; rather, it is the task of the workers, peasants and Indians, of the exploited and oppressed of the entire country. *A workers revolution would have a markedly Indian character everywhere*, on the Pacific coast no less than in the Andean Sierra. A regional separation of reactionary Guayaquil sectors would have to be crushed as the French Revolution

crushed the monarchist rebellion in the Vendée. Under bourgeois domination, any scheme of autonomy for the indigenous peoples would be a fraud, a swindle. But in the framework of a *worker-peasant-Indian government* of Ecuador, that is, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, as part of an Andean federation of workers republics, a great variety of forms of autonomy would be possible, reflecting the rich variety of peoples. For the peoples of the Amazon region, autonomy would not be limited to the corners into which the Indians have been forced to retreat in the face of the capitalist incursions. And the end of the Ecuador-Peru conflict, which only serves the interests of the imperialists and their junior partners, would make it possible to unite the indigenous peoples now divided by this artificial and even invisible border.

### **The Struggle for a Leninist-Trotskyist Party and a Worker-Peasant-Indian Government**

In his famous book, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin stressed the need for the revolutionary workers party to act as a “tribune of the people,” that is, the champion of all the oppressed in their struggle against capitalism. The professional revolutionary does not seek to be “the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.” This aspect, of placing the proletariat at the head of the struggles of the oppressed, is a basic characteristic distinguishing a Leninist-Trotskyist party from reformist parties, whether of the social-democratic or Stalinist variety, which confine their action to the limits permitted by capitalism. Rather than being governmental parties, like the CPs and SPs who form alliances, coalitions and all sorts of rotten blocs with bourgeois sectors, Bolsheviks seek to forge the party of intransigent opposition.

In the Ecuadorian case, the traditional left (however pained it appears over its experience of being Lucio Gutiérrez’ “squeezed lemons”) remains irremediably confined to the channels of popular-frontism. They aspire to be, precisely, reformist trade-union secretaries, and thus they do not offer and cannot offer a revolutionary program for the liberation of indigenous peoples, blacks and all working people. Now various organizations of the Ecuadorian left, meeting in a Congress of the Peoples in Quito, have formed a “People’s Command,” approved a “Unified Strategy to Defeat Neo-Liberalism,” and called for mobilizations against the government for August 21 (CMI, 12 July). The small circles who (mistakenly) identify themselves with Trotskyism do not offer a revolutionary alternative. The Corriente Democrática Socialista (affiliated with the United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel) is distinguished by its openly social-democratic program (it seeks “the extension of democracy to the popular sectors”) which pre-

sented “challenges for the new government” of ex-colonel Gutiérrez (*International Viewpoint*, February 2003). Instead of posing “challenges” to the bourgeois government, prettifying bourgeois democracy, “refounding” the bourgeois republic or fighting against “neo-liberalism,” genuine revolutionaries raise a program of struggle against the regime and the parties which collaborate with it, against capitalism and for socialist revolution.

In Ecuador, as we have indicated, the land question is one of the fundamental issues in presenting a revolutionary solution to the oppression of the indigenous peoples, above all for the peasant agricultural producers of the highlands. It is necessary to fight for an *agrarian revolution*, in which the peasants, Indian and non-Indian alike, take over the large estates and farms rather than petitioning a government agrarian reform agency. But, as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky all stressed, the peasantry – an intermediate layer which lacks the cohesion and solid interests of a class – cannot lead the revolution. Achieving this goal will only be possible in the context of a workers revolution which expropriates the capitalist haciendas (such as the dairy estates in the highlands), and not just some “semi-feudal” pastures as the Stalinists want. The revolutionary proletariat does not seek to “modernize” bourgeois agriculture, but rather to bring down the ruling class which for centuries has oppressed the Indians. In the ranches and farms having modern machinery, voluntary collectivization would be possible. In other cases, distributing the whole of the land to those who till it (and not only the unproductive lands on the hillsides, as has been the case up to now) will be the norm. Nationalization of the land will make possible traditional Indian practices, such as the annual *reparto* (division) of lands by the commune and the voluntary labor of the *mingas*, that would prepare the way for socialized agriculture, with advanced technology, that laid the basis for eliminating the centuries-old poverty of the countryside.

Autonomy for Indian peoples who desire it would open the possibility of harmonious development toward socialism for the Amazonian Indians without the constant fear of being expelled from their lands, as is the case today. This fear has led to conflicts even with other indigenous groups, such as the recent massacre of Tagaeri Indians by the Huaorani, apparently armed by the lumber companies. The necessary aid should be provided to raise the economic level according to the desires of these peoples, and not as a function of oil company interests. It is also possible that forms of autonomy may be viable in the Sierra. As for calls to introduce customary law, Marxists insist on the need for the justice system to correspond to defense of all the oppressed. There have been cases of lynching of thieves in the name of traditional justice, or in a recent case a woman was stripped and whipped for selling false lottery tickets, punishments that would not be allowed by a revolutionary government, nor would they be demanded by the population once the justice system is no longer an alien institution but instead their own collective action according to revolutionary norms.

Up to the 1980s, the democratic rights of the indigenous population of Ecuador were denied through a series of mecha-

nisms, from the peonage of *huasipungo* to the prohibition of voting rights to those who are illiterate (in Spanish). Although a national program of bilingual education has been introduced, the quality of education in schools in the Indian areas is distinctly inferior, and the teachers' pay is scandalously low. Thus revolutionaries (particularly among the teachers) must fight for *high quality, multilingual public primary and secondary education, accessible to all*; for the nationalization of the universities, and for *open admissions to higher education*, with no tuition or exclusion, and stipends to provide for living expenses of students with low or no incomes. In this and other respects, there is continuing systematic discrimination against Indians. There have been cases reported of schools requiring the cutting off of traditional long hair and banning Indian dress; some towns prohibit Indians from entering, and there are public squares where it is difficult for blacks to gain access. Job advertisements in the newspapers routinely demand "good appearance," which is understood by all to mean the exclusion of Indians and blacks. It is necessary to combat all forms of discrimination, for example against homosexuals, knowing that racism, sexism and homophobia will only disappear with the destruction of the capitalist system which produces them.

In this struggle it is essential to forge revolutionary unity between the roughly 3.5 million Ecuadorian Indians and the 500,000 Afro-Ecuadorians who live on the Pacific Coast, in the Valle del Chota and increasingly in the capital. Indians and blacks are particular targets of police and army repression; they also suffer from far higher rates of unemployment than mestizos and whites. But until now, the unity of these oppressed sectors exists mainly in formal and empty pronouncements. In fact, some of the worst attacks suffered by black peasant communities in the province of Esmeraldas came from Indian peasants claiming the same lands. It is necessary to highlight the history of resistance by the black population of the country, largely descended from the *cimarrones* (escaped

and rebel slaves) who lived in *palenques* (fortified villages). The most famous *palenque* was Esmeraldas itself, which took in slaves fleeing from Colombia. In the 1970s, one of the most important agrarian struggles was the occupation of a hacienda in Imbabura, which led to massive police repression, the burning of the agricultural workers' homes and the police assassination of black leader Mardoqueo León. In 1995, the black parliamentary deputy and leader of the PCMLE Jaime Hurtado was assassinated along with two companions by hit-men in collusion with the police.

Suffering from double and even triple oppression, Indian women have played a leading role in peasant struggles since colonial times. Today women have a much greater economic role than in the recent past, due in part to the emigration of up to 1.5 million Ecuadorians, the large majority of them men, looking for work outside the country. Thus the percentage of Ecuadorian women who are economically active outside the home went from 17 percent in 1974 to 43 percent two decades later. This is reflected in the active participation of indigenous women in the struggles of the last decade. On the other hand, more than 50 percent of Indian women are still illiterate, and they also suffer high rates of death during pregnancy and childbirth. This is due to the deficient and often non-existent medical care, and also to the horrible economic conditions in which they live. Trotskyists fight for full participation of women in social labor, with *equal pay for equal work*; for *free day care*, paid for by the companies and open 24 hours a day; for a *socialized high-quality health care system*; for the right to *free abortion on demand*; and for the socialization of household tasks in the framework of a planned economy. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

As shown by the recent Ecuadorian teachers' and oil workers' strikes, all working people suffer from the repression, exploitation and oppression engendered by capitalism. The drastic increases in the prices of fuel, water, electricity and medicine affect everyone. Fake social-

ists and the Indian movement have in recent years assailed "neo-liberalism" and "globalization." In reality, the origin of poverty, unemployment and other scourges is to be found in capitalism and imperialism; it is not the result of a mere *policy* but of a *system* which must be brought down. A workers party would fight for a program of jobs for all, though a *sliding scale of wages and working hours*. In response to the multi-million-dollar swindles by bankers and politicians, it would demand the *abolition of commercial secrets* and by means of workers action would *open the books of the companies*. At the high point of struggle, it would impose *workers control of*

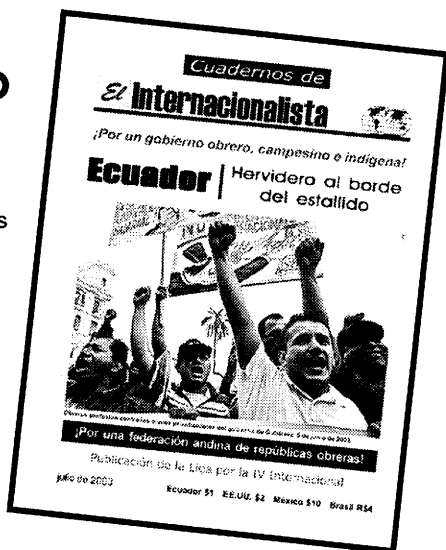
## Ecuador: hervidero al borde del estallido

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production by factory committees. It will be necessary to form *workers, peasants and Indians self-defense committees*, developing into workers militias, to protect strikes and peasant actions against the bosses' thugs. All these transitional measures point toward workers revolution and a planned economy, which for the first time would make possible the liberation of Indians, blacks, women and all the oppressed.

But such a revolution would not limit itself to the narrow confines of a small Andean country. It is essential to fight on the basis of a proletarian internationalist program. While the "M-L" Stalinists in Ecuador and Peru supported their respective bourgeoisies in the interminable border dispute and 1995 war, even accusing the governments of "selling out the fatherland" for sacrificing sacred national territory, Trotskyists take the Bolshevik position of *revolutionary defeatism on both sides* in this reactionary war. Today, as Yankee imperialism is stepping up its intervention in the region, mainly directed against Colombian guerrillas, it is urgently necessary to mobilize the strength of the workers, peasants and Indians to *kick the U.S. military out of the Manta air base*, and all military installations in the country. Despite its empty declarations of solidarity and opposition to the U.S. presence in Manta, the very presence of Pachakutik and PCM/MPD ministers in the government has served to endorse the military intervention of imperialism. It should be noted as well that in participating in protests against the imperialist invasion of Iraq, these parties oriented their demands to pressure Gutiérrez instead of fighting directly against the president who declared himself the "best ally" of the warmonger Bush. *Nationalism and popular-frontism go hand in hand leading to capitulation before imperialism.*

The working people and indigenous peoples of Ecuador are in a position today as never before for their struggles to have an international impact. The emigration of more than 15 percent of the entire population of the country both reflects the excruciating economic situation, in which the large majority live in poverty, at the same time as it has placed Ecuadorian workers in the heart of the European and North American metropolises. More than 100,000 Ecuadorians live in New York City alone, working in garment industry sweatshops and construction. Hundreds of thousands of Ecuadorians now reside in Spain, where they have been victims of xenophobia and outrages from the government of the former Francoist Aznar. In fighting against the persecution of immigrants, demanding *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, and opposing imperialist wars from Iraq to Colombia, Ecuadorian workers can have an impact extending far beyond South America to the imperialist centers. But in order to do so, the essential instrument is a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, which brings revolutionary consciousness to the most advanced working people, rebel youth, women and fighters for Indian rights. Through its intervention in the class struggle and its Marxist educational work in developing cadres, this party would prepare the conditions for real victories for the working people in the future.

Under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party that would unite the "red ponchos" of indigenous rebels with the

international proletariat, the working people of this Indian country can unleash a workers revolution with a force superior to that of the Cotopaxi and Chimborazo volcanoes which will be felt as far away as Wall Street. *For a worker-peasant-Indian government, an Andean federation of workers republics and a Socialist United States of Latin America! For common struggle together with North American and European workers! Down with bourgeois nationalism – long live revolutionary proletarian internationalism! Fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International! ■*

## Ecuadorian Hotbed...

*continued from page 45*

Aspiazu to Miguel Llucio, the national coordinator of Pachakutik. The manager of the Deposit Guarantee Agency, Wilma Salgado, who is also a member of Pachakutik, refused to recognize the validity of Llucio's Progreso Repatriation Trust, secretly cooked up in the Bahamas, because it favored Aspiazu, reputed to be the most corrupt banker in the country. Gutiérrez refused to meet with a delegation of Pachakutik because he was fed up with their criticisms, but just the day before the president had a personal meeting with Llucio, who asked for presidential intervention in order to save his juicy deal in the EMELEC case (*Hoy*, 15 July).

This issue has been treated in the press as one more case of corruption. In reality it is something far more ambitious: the attempt to use Pachakutik's election victory in order to establish an economic foothold in the capitalist class, and in this way to go about forming an Indian bourgeoisie as an integral part of the Ecuadorian bourgeoisie. It's hardly surprising: this very same procedure of milking the government treasury has been used by the rest of the bourgeois clans in the country.

Even before the formation of CONAIE in 1986, its different components were organized as a response to and in opposition to the existing Indian movement, which was closely linked to the left. The Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI), formed by the Ecuadorian Communist Party (PCE) after the "glorious May revolution" of 1944 (which replaced the dictatorship of Arroyo del Río with the liberal-populist bourgeois junta of Velasco Ibarra), led peasant and Indian struggles for three decades. Together with the Federation of Agricultural Workers of the Coast (FTAL), it fought for agrarian reform. But although they adopted a language of class, the FEI and FTAL strictly limited their actions to the capitalist framework, reflecting the reformist politics of the PCE. Their Stalinist scheme of "two-stage revolution" held that:

"Ecuadorian society was semi-feudal, it indicates certain bourgeois sectors as possible allies, or at least elements that could be neutralized by the workers and peasants; it assumes that U.S. imperialism is interested in maintaining the traditional structure of production in the countryside and, finally, it calls for carrying out an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution of national liberation, whose function would be to remove the obstacles to autonomous capitalist development...."

When a capitalist land reform was implemented in Ecuador by

military governments following the signals of U.S. imperialism (in the framework of the "Alliance for Progress," designed to isolate the Cuban Revolution) and with the support of "developmentalist" sectors of the bourgeoisie, the PCE and its FEI and FTAL fronts promptly lost their previously dominant role among the peasants and Indians.

Agrarian reform was carried out on two occasions, first in 1964 under the military junta which, conspiring with the CIA, overthrew the center-left government of Julio Arosemena and then implemented the program he had designed. This reform limited itself to a program of colonizing uncultivated lands and abolition of forms of servitude, above all *huasipungo*, a kind of peonage in which the Indian was tied to the land, frequently by means of debts, required to provide four to six days a week of labor to the landowner in exchange for a minuscule wage and the right to use a small plot to maintain his family. The second military "agrarian reform" was in 1973.

As a result of these reforms, peasant revolts which had swept through Ecuadorian agriculture in the early 1960s decreased. Since then, protests have consisted of demanding action by the government agrarian reform agency, the IERAC. *Latifundismo* (large landholdings) was not abolished, but its extent was diminished. On the other hand, the reform promoted the modernization of many *haciendas*, and a layer of medium-sized capitalist farmers was created. The members of this layer are similar to *kulaks*, the rich peasants in Russia who exploited the labor of poor peasants. Landless peasants became proletarianized: having lost all access to land, many were forced to emigrate to the cities or overseas looking for work. Simultaneously there arose several indigenous organizations in the countryside, founded by the Church, with an agenda of "ethnic" demands rather than the "class" demands of the previous peasant struggles. It is precisely these *kulaks* and capitalist farmers, businessmen linked to the marketing of agricultural and textile products, a layer of bourgeois professionals (lawyers, educators) and government bureaucrats who today dominate the Indian movement.

Even before the uprising of 1990 (see "Marxism and the Indian Question in Ecuador," page 46 of this issue), in 1988 an agreement was reached with the Education Ministry which founded the National Bureau of Bilingual Intercultural Education, as well as provincial bureaus of bilingual education, under the explicit control of CONAIE. This step provided the umbrella organization of the indigenous movement with a considerable number of jobs and management positions. Later, following the 1997 uprising which led to the fall of Bucaram, the Planning and Development Council of the Indian and Black Peoples was formed, presided over by Nina Pacari of Pachakutik and provided with resources to sponsor communal projects. That same year a National Constituent Assembly was held, largely due to the demands of CONAIE. It didn't proclaim a "plurinational" state, but Article I of the Constitution was changed to declare Ecuador a "unitary, decentralized, pluricultural and multiethnic" country; Spanish is still the only official language, but "Quechua and other indigenous languages are recognized in their respective areas of usage"; bilingual education now enjoys a constitutional guarantee; the

Indian councils are recognized, but without approving their autonomy, etc. In this way, the Ecuadorian bourgeoisie made a series of limited steps to integrate (buy off) the indigenous leadership, with the results we are witnessing today.

Already in January, we noted that the "struggle" of the Indian leaders was above all a fight to occupy ministerial posts: Pacari in foreign relations, Torres in education, Lucas Macas in agriculture. This does not represent a capitulation, as some pretend, but a strategy of investing themselves with the powers of the bourgeois state. That has been their aim at least since the formation of Pachakutik in 1996. Segundo Moreno Yáñez comments in his book, *El levantamiento indígena del Inti Raymi de 1990* (Editorial Abya-Yala, 1992): "the prerequisites for the ethnic agenda gaining the strength that it now has in the indigenous movement were the dissolution of the *hacienda* and the appearance of an Indian social group with both political and economic strength." Further on, he points to "a process of capitalist accumulation in broad Indian sectors that has produced social differentiation, giving rise to minority elite groups," as well as "broad sectors of Indian peasants, whose economy is not simply determined by the production of means of subsistence, but by the production of surpluses which are channeled to the market...." These Indian elites are fighting above all for their "share of power."

The reality is that the political program of CONAIE and Pachakutik expresses the interests of a striving petty-bourgeois layer and some middle-level entrepreneurs who dream of becoming an integral part of the Ecuadorian capitalist class. Contrary to the alarmist cries of ultra-reactionary and racist sectors, there is nothing separatist or communist about the present leaders of the indigenous movement. Their fight for ministerial positions rather than opposing the government's starvation policies reflects their real aims. Their ethnic discourse serves to cement a clientele as a maneuverable mass in the horse trading of bourgeois politics. The NGOs ("non-governmental organizations") serve to channel funds from the government and international imperialist institutions.

For the indigenous masses, weighed down by the dollarized capitalist economy and the IMF attacks on their livelihoods; for the "starving legion" of landless peasants and those *minifundistas* who only have access to a tiny parcel insufficient to feed their families; for the hundreds of thousands of Indians who have been forced to migrate from the countryside to the city, or to leave the country in search of work, the "conquests" of the bourgeois Indian politicians aren't worth a damn. The decisive hour has arrived: those in the ranks of the indigenous movement who seek to fight against the oppressors must break with their sellout leaders and join the struggle for a proletarian and revolutionary leadership.

The liberation of the Indians from the yoke of capitalism, whether it is "globalized" or "national," can only come as a result of the common struggle of all the exploited and oppressed, led by a genuinely revolutionary workers party. Its slogan must be: *For a worker-peasant-Indian government of Ecuador, in an Andean federation of workers republics and a Socialist United States of Latin America!* ■

# The Latter-Day Spartacist League

## Creeping Social-Patriotism

The September 11 indiscriminate attack on New York City's World Trade Center two years ago was the starting gun for a continuous war that has dominated world events ever since. This has posed a severe test for would-be revolutionaries. The Spartacist League and its International Communist League capitulated to the pressures of imperialism, as did many groups on the left. Like the reformists, the SL's initial statement began and ended with a lengthy denunciation of the terrorists; nowhere did it call to defend the countries on the U.S.' hit list or to defeat U.S. imperialism in the coming war. Later, while belatedly calling to defend Afghanistan, they deliberately refused to call for defeat of "their own" bourgeoisie (see "SL/ICL Flinches on Afghanistan War," *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001).

A year later over the war on Iraq, the SL/ICL again refused to call for defeat of U.S. imperialism. Meanwhile, they accused the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International of "Playing the Counterfeit Card of Anti-Americanism," of being soft on Islamic fundamentalism and playing to "'Third World' nationalists for whom the 'only good American is a dead American'." This not only is a repulsive lie, such slanders hurled in the midst of war hysteria can be used to generate repression against revolutionaries, as charges of "anti-Americanism" were in earlier periods of wartime and post-war crackdowns.

The SL/ICL, which for several decades upheld revolutionary Trotskyism, has degenerated into centrism, in good part out of demoralization stemming from the 1989-92 counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe. Rather than drawing a sharp and consistent class line, it now zigzags and succumbs to the influence of the bourgeoisie. It has increasingly evolved into a "left" variant of the "social patriotism" that Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought in World War I.

This is reflected in every aspect of SL politics. Thus an article in the SL paper *Workers Vanguard* (1 August) on the showdown between the telephone workers unions and the East Coast phone giant Verizon included the following passage:

"Communications workers demonstrated the crucial role they play immediately following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center. Workers from not only NYC but from upstate New York, Connecticut and New Jersey piled into lower Manhattan, working more than 12-hour days, seven days a week for weeks at a time to get the communications grid up and running; the New York Stock Exchange was working only a week after the attack."

In fact, phone workers were worked around the clock to get communications "up and running" *exclusively for the capitalists*. Residents of the "ground zero" area (including Chinatown) didn't get phone service restored for several months.

Significantly, the *New York Times* (31 July) cited the very same example as WV, but spelled out the political logic more clearly:

"At times, Verizon and its unions have had a strong partnership. The company and the workers received considerable praise for their cooperative efforts in rewiring Lower Man-

hattan after the September 2001 terrorist attacks.... But those warm feelings have evaporated in the current negotiations as Verizon called for weakening job security provisions and obtaining more leeway to transfer workers."

At bottom, the SL's opportunist appeal is to the "warm feelings" of class collaboration (a/k/a "partnership"). That is the essence of social-patriotism.

### Big Liars and "Provocateur"-Baiters

In our last issue (*The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003) we published an article, "Poisonous 'Provocateur' Baiting from the SL," refuting a smear job against the Internationalist Group and our members in *Workers Vanguard* (18 October 2002). The WV article called a letter to the editor we sent them "An IG Provocation" for objecting to their peddling of stereotypes that the bosses use to divide black and Latino workers. And they labeled the author of our letter a "provocateur," raving about "the repulsive strutting demagogue and provocateur Negrete."

In responding to this slimy *ad hominem* attack, we noted: "Provocateur"-baiting, cop-baiting – these are the filthy techniques of opportunists who want to hide their capitulation to the bourgeoisie by character assassination of those who uphold revolutionary principle. Any Trotskyist will immediately recognize the technique, for 'provocateur' is exactly the accusation that was leveled at Trotsky and his followers in the 1930s by Stalin and the Stalinists." We also published a statement from Esteban Volkov, grandson of Leon Trotsky, denouncing the SL's defamation of comrade Negrete and insisting, "These methods and procedures must be banished from the workers movement."

Smarting over this repudiation of their vile smear, the SL has now come back in the paper of its Mexican group, *Espartaco* (Fall-Winter 2003), by *escalating* its venomous "provocateur" baiting, accusing the IG of "duping" Volkov and attacking Volkov for not "even taking the trouble to check the facts." What cynical arrogance from the ICL! In his statement, Volkov denounced the SL's "accusations of being a provocateur, hurled without evidence" at Abram Negrete. Did WV call our comrade a "provocateur"? It did. Did it have any proof? It did not. So Volkov got his facts right, the SL/ICL is lying, case closed.

But there is a strange quality to the SL's lies. Since they got caught in the act, they try to weasel out of it by pretending that the word "provocateur" doesn't mean "agent provocateur," i.e., a cop. Then they repeat their vile slander in the very next sentence! Every reader can see that they are flatly falsifying. What does the SL/ICL care? Following the technique of the Big Lie, they just keep piling on one fabrication after another. They clearly think their readers are phenomenally stupid, or don't give a damn about the truth, and that they can get away with saying anything. They can't.

Esteban Volkov has played an invaluable role in upholding Trotskyist standards of communist morality, insisting that such wild accusations against proven militants have no place in the



workers movement. By disparaging Volkov, on top of slandering the IG/LFI and its militants, *the ICL condemns itself*. In fact, its frenzied actions recalls the methods of Gerry Healy and David North, who as their outfit spiraled toward self-destruction in the 1980s despicably baited leaders of the U.S. Trotskyists in the late '30s of being KGB or FBI agents or both, and being complicit in the assassination of Trotsky.

In its October 2002 article, the SL accused the Internationalist Group of "encouraging and justifying violence against political opponents in the workers movement," for "what else could be the IG's purpose in screaming that we are 'anti-Latino chauvinists' at immigrant rights demonstrations, if not to incite violence against us." We did no such thing. Moreover, we pointed out, the IG has repeatedly defended the SL against exclusion attempts and denounced violence against them. We challenged the SL to "*produce even one statement from an independent witness saying that we tried to incite people against them.*" After four months, the ICL has produced no such statement or witness, nor can they, for it never happened.

*The SL stands condemned as shameless slanderers.*

## Inventions About SL-LRP Debate

In its account of the May 10 debate between the Spartacist League and the League for the Revolutionary Party, *Workers Vanguard* (6 June) went into contortions to make an amalgam between the latter-day Shachtmanite LRP, the Mensheviks of the misnamed Bolshevik Tendency and the Trotskyist Internationalist Group. WV claimed: "IG *supremo* Jan Norden had to devote the bulk of his intervention to denouncing Shachtmanism only so that one of his comrades could get up and sound indistinguishable from the LRP in chauvinist baiting the SL."

We fired off a letter to WV protesting against the utter fabrication that our comrade Antonio's intervention was "indistinguishable from the LRP in chauvinist baiting the SL," and challenged them to print his remarks. WV has not done so. Here is what our speakers said:

### Norden:

"I'm speaking on behalf of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International. We have a debate here today between two organizations claiming to be revolutionary. On the one hand, we have the League for the Revolutionary Party, which claims to be Trotskyist, which is a clear contradiction down to the bone. What we heard today was repulsive, Shachtmanite, screaming anti-communism. They reject Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union and Stalinism. Their policy overall is one of classless support to mass struggle and tailism. They tail after the anti-war movement. Their only objection to the Democratic Party politicians is they want to be up there on the platform with them. In the Near East they have blatant tailing after Arab nationalism. Their policy for the Hebrew workers in Israel is that they just have the right to leave, contrary to anything that Trotskyism stands for. In the trade unions, their policy amounts to tailing after out-bureaucrats who cross the class line by suing the unions, and their supporter was elected as a bureaucrat by giving so-called critical support to them.

"They do not recognize the class line in the unions, they do

not recognize it on the Soviet Union or Palestine. On the Russian question, they are marked by visceral anti-communism. Today they claim to defend Iraq and defeat U.S. imperialism, but on Afghanistan, when the Soviet Army intervened against the CIA-backed, mullah-led forces, they washed their hands and said 'a plague on both your houses.' The Trotskyists called for hailing the Red Army in Afghanistan. Nobody with an ounce of revolutionary fiber could take the anti-communist line that the LRP took. On the Soviet Union on World War II, they refuse to defend the Soviet Union. When Yeltsin came to power, they stood with Yeltsin. This is an abomination. Their lineage goes right back to Max Shachtman, and whether they deny it or don't deny it, it is clear to everyone that that's exactly what they stand for.

"The Spartacist League, on the other hand, is a different organization. They for three decades defended revolutionary Trotskyism. In particular, they opposed popular fronts in Chile, France, the U.S. They defended the Soviet Union against counterrevolution. But since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the Spartacist League and the ICL have made a sharp turn to the right.

"We say that we are Leninists and Trotskyists. Why do we say that? On Trotskyism, the central thesis of Trotskyism is that the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. The Spartacist League and ICL now reject that position. They say that 'predated' the qualitative reversal in the consciousness of the working class; in other words, it's an outdated program. This backward consciousness of the working class has been used to justify a whole series of capitulations that the Spartacist League undertakes, withdrawing slogans because they say the working class is not ready for that.

"Leninism. What does Leninism stand for? For one thing, it stands for revolutionary defeatism in imperialist war. The Spartacist League now says it's wrong to raise defeatism in this imperialist war because of military reasons, for technical reasons. It's not military, it's not technical, it's political – that's why they do this. For example, they say that it's sufficient to call for class struggle 'at home.' Except when there is class struggle 'at home,' for example on the West Coast docks, and they had previously raised the demand, which we continued to raise, for 'hot-cargoing' military cargo, they dropped the demand in the middle of the [October 2002] lockout when it was concretely posed.

"On the Leninist party, they revised the concept of the Leninist party, talking endlessly about patiently explaining, and not about organizing the working class in struggle. That is Luxemburgism, not Leninism. All of this goes back to Shachtmanism. You can read in our leaflet [see "Revolutionaries and the Test of War," *The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003] where we analyze this. On defeatism, they stand with [Shachtmanite spokesman Hal] Draper. On Puerto Rican independence, they stand with Draper. Behind it all, it's capitulation to their own bourgeoisie."

### Antonio

"Antonio, supporter of the Internationalist Group. Today we hear both organizations talk about and quote Lenin and Trotsky. Everybody learned from Lenin that the central theme for

*continued on page 60*

## LFI and Others Were Targeted

# A Band of Political Impostors and Swindlers in Ukraine

A bizarre case of political and financial fraud has been uncovered in Ukraine, in which a band of a dozen or so con artists simultaneously posed as sections of ten or more different international tendencies, including the League for the Fourth International (LFI). The crew of swindlers apparently started out as the Ukrainian affiliate of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) in the mid-1990s, but subsequently took on the identities of the international organization of the British Workers Power group, now called the League for the Fifth International (LSI); the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT); the League for the Revolutionary Party's international organization, the Communist Organization for the Fourth International (LRP/COFI); the World Socialist Movement of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB/WSM); the International Trotskyist Opposition grouping inside the United Secretariat (ITO/Usec); News and Letters and the Socialist Labor Party in the U.S.; and the LFI, among others. At least one purpose of the elaborate scam was to obtain funds from the various groups.

News of this rip-off operation came to light in late July, when the SPGB received a warning from Russian "council communists," the Group of Proletarian Revolutionary Collectivists (GPRC), that its Ukrainian group was a fraud. The SPGB was able to establish that the leader of "their" group, the World Socialist Party (WSP) of Ukraine, and delegate to the 2002 WSM conference, known to them as "Semyon Shevchenko," was identical to Oleg Vernik of the CWI's Robitnichi Sprotiv (RS – Workers Resistance), who even ran for electoral office for the RS. The IBT subsequently identified the same person as Vitaliy of "their" section, the Young Revolutionary Marxists. Contacted in mid-August by the IBT who furnished photos of members of the "YRM," we were able to identify at least six members of the Revoliutsionnaya Kommunisticheskaya Organizatsiya (RKO – Revolutionary Communist Organization), which had fused with the LFI in August 2001. The main leader of the RKO, known to us as "Vasily Dmitrulin," was the same as Boris Pastukh, the head of the IBT group. Seeking further information, we contacted the CWI, SPGB and other groups affected by the fraud, and demanded explanations from the "RKO," which unsurprisingly did not respond.

Given the unambiguous nature of the accumulated evidence, the executive committee of the League for the Fourth International states that the fusion with the Ukrainian "RKO" is null and void. We are publishing photos of the two main leaders of this gang, Pastukh and Vernik, in order to warn others to beware of these scoundrels. At the same time, we are continuing to pursue efforts to obtain information as to the extent and origins of the hoax perpetrated against the LFI and

other left organizations. Whether this operation was motivated by cynical nationalism, by motives of purely personal gain or was part of a police provocation (or some combination of these), such elements must be ruthlessly exposed and driven out of the workers movement.

The "RKO" initially contacted us in the early fall of 2000. After almost a year of extensive correspondence concerning key programmatic issues, a representative of the LFI traveled to Kiev in the summer of 2001 where talks were held over the course of a week. This led to the preparation of a declaration of fusion in which the "RKO" joined the League for the Fourth International. An issue of a paper, *Internatsionalist*, in Ukrainian and Russian, was published that November. However, despite two further visits by comrades of the LFI in 2002, communication with the group proved sporadic, causing us growing concern.

We had had suspicions for the last nine months that something was amiss with the "RKO" when we repeatedly requested that they send us a copy of the alleged second issue of their paper, which they claimed was published last November. In December, a European comrade of the LFI visited Kiev for a number of days, but was unable to meet with any of the leaders, although he had been invited. In response to our inquiries about this strange absence, we were informed that their leader "Vasily" had suffered a heart attack, and was reportedly hospitalized for months, during which time we were not able to correspond with or speak with him. Moreover, those who responded to our messages used different names than those we were familiar with; when we skeptically queried them, they blithely said that they had just changed pseudonyms. They did send us leaflets they claimed to have issued in antiwar protests, but they did not have the position of the LFI on Israel-Palestine, which had been a subject of considerable discussion. When we questioned this, there was no response.

Finally, when we tried to send a European representative of the LFI to Ukraine to see what was going on, we were told twice that it was a bad time. The claim was made that there was generalized police repression against the left. When we probed for more information, since we could find no other reports of such a wave of repression, we were told that things were extremely dangerous, with people being hauled in for questioning, hard drives removed from computers, etc., and if our representative came they might not return for some time (i.e., be arrested). Clearly, all these excuses were inventions to prevent us from finding out what was behind the strange behavior of the group. It turns out that it was considerably stranger than we had imagined. In retrospect, the operation even had some rather comical aspects, such as the irate complaints from the



The person who called himself "Vasily Dmitrulin" in the "RKO" (left) is the same as Boris Pastukh (also known as "Alexander Sherbakov") in the "YRM" (second from left), a/k/a "Ivan" in the "WSP" and "Ihor" in the "UWG" (affiliated with News and Letters). The person who presented himself as "Mikhail" in the "RKO" (second from right) is the same as Oleg Vernik of the "RS" (right), a/k/a "Vitaliy" in the "YRM," "Yakov" in the "RWO" (affiliated with the LRP/COFI), "Semyon Sevchenko" in the "WSP," and "Viktor" in the "UWG."

IBT's "YRM" that the "RKO" had slandered them in claiming they were part of a popular front together with bourgeois political currents, or the denunciations of the opportunism of the CWI's "RS" by several of the phony groups.

As for the financial aspect, while the amounts from a particular group may have been small (in our case they were limited to funds for a computer and the first issue of the "RKO" paper), taken together it may have been a more substantial sum, especially in an impoverished country with monthly wages around \$50. There is also the possibility that one objective was to discredit the groups targeted. Yet the tendencies affected were quite diverse, ranging from the Trotskyist LFI to various pseudo-Trotskyist outfits (CWI, IBT, LSI), the neo-Shachtmanite LRP/COFI, the social-democratic SPGB as well as latter-day De Leonists and Bordiguists. Or did the scheme start with members of a leftist group deciding to supplement their incomes with some underhanded "creative financing"? The mode of operation, and particularly the training the "members" had to go through to play their parts in the charade, have the hallmarks of a classic "false flag" operation, in which agents of one power pretend to be representatives of another. This suggests a possible relation to intelligence agencies, either directly or involving former operatives "privatizing" their activities and putting prior training to profitable use.

We do not now know the answers to these questions, and may not know for some time. But however odd the particulars may be, it is important to put this affair in historical context. Revolutionary organizations have often been beset by adventurers, swindlers, police agents, quick-change artists and charlatans of all kinds. In some cases, they have gained prominence and played a tragically treacherous role, while others, as in this case, are minor actors. We have run into dubious elements on other occasions who have tried to pass themselves off as different things to different people. While in this case we did not detect their deception until it was revealed, reportedly by a defector from the gang itself, the Marxist response has always been to shine the light of revolutionary politics on the

dark recesses where such figures ply their wares.

The appearance of shady characters is particularly frequent after a defeat of the proletariat, when the workers movement is in a phase of decomposition. This is the situation today in the countries of the former Soviet Union. A recent novel, *The Corrections*, by Jonathan Franzen relates an elaborate dot.com swindle set in the post-Soviet Baltic countries, in which young political entrepreneurs raise money via a Web site (lithuania.com), bilking Internet investors into buying shares in a fictitious Lithuania, Inc. The novel reflects the frenzy of "funny money" operations, pyramid schemes and similar swindles that have flourished in the aftermath of counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe. These Ukrainian con men reflect the same mentality, and it is nothing new.

Following the defeat of the 1848 revolutions in Europe, the remnants of the Communist League were beset by adventurers (Willich and Schapper) who sought to finance their "revolution" with a loan from a New York bank, police agents who supplied falsified minutes of party meetings and perjured testimony to anti-communist trials, and pseudo-democratic Bonapartist agents (Vogt) who sought to frame the communist leaders with smears and slanders. Marx responded with his sharply polemic pamphlets, *The Cologne Communist Trial* and *Herr Vogt*. The tsarist secret police, the Okhrana, managed to recruit and place agents in the Bolshevik party, including one Roman Malinovsky, who on Lenin's nomination became a member of the Bolshevik central committee and leader of its Duma (parliamentary) fraction. Despite a party investigation, the facts of Malinovsky's treachery only came out following the October 1917 Revolution, when the police archives were opened (and the traitor turned himself in).

In the Trotskyist movement, there were swashbucklers like the notorious Raymond Molinier, who came up with one opportunist gimmick after another, and made his living through bill collecting. Although he was eventually expelled from the Fourth International, Molinier's heirs (notably Pierre Frank) pushed their revisionist politics in the post-World War II Euro-



pean Trotskyist milieu, with disastrous consequences. There were Stalinist agents who infiltrated the International Left Opposition, even becoming top functionaries, including Jakob Frank, Paul Obin (M. Mill) and Mark Zborowski ("Étienne"), who was the right-hand man of Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, in the International Secretariat and who arranged the assassination of Erwin Wolf in Spain, Ignaz Reiss in Switzerland and Rudolf Klement in Paris, and almost certainly that of Sedov himself. Some renegades (such as Georges Vereecken) and political bandits (such as Gerry Healy) sought to make political capital and hide their own opportunism by blaming the Trotskyists for these assassinations and that of Trotsky himself, confusing the victims with the perpetrators.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky had to deal with infiltrators, frame-up artists and all-round no-goodniks, and all proportions guarded, we will too. Historical experience shows that those who fight to build revolutionary communist parties and to reforge the Fourth International will confront the flotsam and jetsam of capitalist society. It is necessary to maintain vigilance to ward off, to the extent possible, the damage they can wreak on the revolutionary vanguard. At the same time it is necessary to maintain the proper functioning of the Leninist party, which is based on comradely trust rooted in the communist program. Without the program, the basis for trust is missing; without the trust, comrades will be paralyzed in their efforts to carry it out.

In his book, *What Every Revolutionary Should Know About Repression*, written in 1921 on the basis of an investigation of the Okhrana archives seized by the victorious Bolshevik revolutionaries, Victor Serge presents in detail the case of the traitor and provocateur Malinovsky. In his conclusions, Serge wrote: "Provocation is much more dangerous in terms of the distrust it sows among revolutionaries. As soon as a few traitors are unmasked, trust disappears from within the organizations. It is a terrible thing, because confidence in the party is the cement of all revolutionary forces." The revolution triumphed because the political program, organization, determination and ability of the revolutionaries both reflected and acted upon a rising working class, infusing it with revolutionary consciousness and leadership. In contrast, despite the perfection of the tsarist police machinery it rested upon the corrupt and crumbling autocracy.

The strange case of the Ukrainian "RS"/"YRM"/"RKO"/"RWO"/"RV"/"UTO"/"UWG"/"RKU," etc. is a by-product of the destruction of the Soviet Union, the first workers state in history. The demise of the USSR under the relentless pressure of imperialism was prepared by decades of sabotage and gutting of revolutionary gains by the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. The program of Lenin and Trotsky's Red October was betrayed by Stalin and his heirs, whose anti-communist repression was based on the reactionary pipedream of building "socialism in one country" through "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Authentic Trotskyists fought to oust the bureaucracy and defend the Soviet and East European degenerated/deformed workers states, as the League for the Fourth International continues to do today in defense of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The full range of opportunist tendencies (pseudo-Trotskyists and open social democrats alike)

tailed after or openly joined forces with the counterrevolution, according to their particular proclivities.

A decade after the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet bloc, the working people of these countries are mired in poverty and plagued by nationalist bloodletting. In this Ukrainian affair, we see some of the peculiar things that grow in the wake of counterrevolution. No doubt cynics and gossips impregnated with the reigning ideology of the "death of communism" will seize upon this episode to disparage the struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International. Our predecessors had to go through such tests, and the League for the Fourth International will as well, fighting for the program of world socialist revolution and to bring the legacy of Lenin and Trotsky to the homeland of the October Revolution.

League for the Fourth International

27 August 2003

## Creeping Social Patriotism...

*continued from page 57*

revolutionaries is your attitude toward your own bourgeoisie, this is the big test of an imperialist war. An organization that capitulates to its own bourgeoisie, that does not fight for its defeat, cannot lead the proletariat in a revolutionary struggle. This does not depend on the military strength of the other side. It is a basic principle of communism.

"The whole basis of the LRP's politics has been capitulation to U.S. imperialism. We know what Trotsky wrote about Shachtman. We know what Trotsky wrote about defense of the Soviet Union. We know you come from Shachtman, even though you try to hide this. Your organization exists only because it opposed the position of Trotsky. You joined the imperialists in demanding Russians out of Afghanistan, and you pretend that was a national question, a national struggle. But in a real struggle against imperialism, against United States colonialism, you did not take the position that Lenin did, and Trotsky. You do not demand independence of Puerto Rico from the U.S. imperialists. Since the Spartacist League changed its line, today the LRP and the SL have the same position on Puerto Rican independence. What is this position? Capitulation to U.S. imperialism.

"We have seen the banners of the Spartacist League. In the first Gulf War, what did they say? They said, 'Defeat U.S. Imperialism.' Today they fight against that line. You oppose fighting for the longshore workers to 'hot cargo' war material. And you even attack the Internationalist group by saying the Internationalist Group supposedly 'plays the card of anti-Americanism.' 'Anti-Americanism': how many times have I heard this from the U.S. government?

"The last thing: the LRP wants to coexist with the imperialist liberals, and the Spartacist League hailed Barbara Lee and Jesse Jackson talking about the sacred U.S. Constitution and the Statue of Liberty. For whom? Not for the workers. Not for the immigrants. Not for the real revolutionaries."

**Indistinguishable from the LRP? Hardly.** Our comrade was making the point that the SL and LRP *both* capitulate to the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie, often (as over Puerto Rico) in ways that not only "sound indistinguishable," they actually are. ■

# 140 Dead – President Flees as Miners Pour into La Paz Vice President Takes Over Due to Union Tops' Sellout

## Bolivian Workers Uprising Knifed, Workers Still on Battle Footing

Sebastian Hacher/Indymedia Bolivia



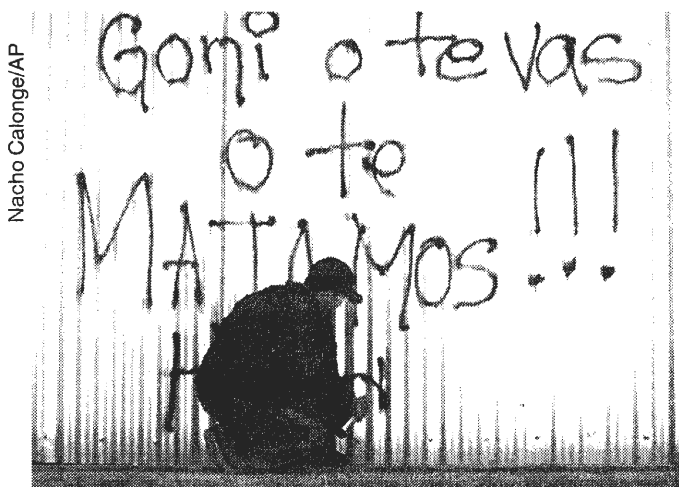
Plaza de San Francisco in La Paz overflows on October 17, full of miners and other workers demanding the resignation of President Sánchez de Lozada.

**The Central Slogan Remains:  
Workers to Power!  
Build the Nucleus of a Genuine  
Trotskyist Bolshevik Party!**

OCTOBER 26 – After weeks of massive and increasingly combative mobilizations, on October 17 Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada fled the country, leaving his vice president Carlos Mesa in power. What set off the conflict was “Goni’s” plan to carry out a new looting of Bolivia’s natural resources through a sweetheart contract with a consortium of imperialist companies. In order to please his masters in Washington, the murderous president drenched the country in blood, with a toll of 140 dead and some 500 injured, according to the figures of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB – Bolivian Labor Federa-

tion). The repression was coordinated with U.S. military commanders. Furious demonstrators wrote on the walls in the center of La Paz, “Goni, either you go or we’ll kill you.” The next day, San Francisco Plaza in the Bolivian capital was filled with tens of thousands of workers and peasants celebrating the departure of the bloody tyrant.

It was the miners who were decisive in forcing the flight of Sánchez de Lozada. When they managed to pass the military barrier at Patacamaya – where three of their comrades were killed by the army – the president’s last day had begun. His fate was sealed with the arrival of more than 10,000 miners in the center of La Paz on the morning of Friday, October 17. In the city of El Alto, the poorest city on the continent with some 600,000 inhabitants, demonstrators were constantly chanting for “civil war.” Yet by granting an “intermission” to “Goni’s” successor, the leaders of the COB, together with those of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) and the Indian movement,



Nacho Calonge/AP

**"Goni, either you go or we'll kill you." Demonstrator in La Paz paints his dramatic message, October 16. The next day the murderous president left.**

betrayed the workers who fought so heroically against the puppet regime in the "gas war." They stabbed the burgeoning workers uprising in the back; in reality, they feared it as much as the bourgeoisie did.

Many fake leftists are hailing the "victory," but toppling the hated president and replacing him with his anointed successor is hardly a victory. The League for the Fourth International, in contrast, denounces the *betrayal* by the misleaders of the workers and peasants – including those who claim to be revolutionaries – in granting a "truce" to the new president. Mesa is a puppet of the armed forces and imperialism, and has the backing of the White House, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We warn that the new president is wedded to the same program of privatization, poverty and pillaging of the country by the "multinationals" as his godfather Sánchez de Lozada. But the final outcome is yet to be determined. The workers are still on the alert, ready to mobilize again. We stress that the central demand continues to be, *Workers to power!* The urgent task is still *the construction of the nucleus of a genuinely Trotskyist Bolshevik party.*

### **The Bourgeoisie's "Operation Rescue" and the Absence of a Revolutionary Leadership**

In the confrontation at Patacamaya, where the army dispatched two tanks and a plane against the crowd, the military finally let the marchers pass after several thousand miners managed to get around the blockade. Together with university students from Oruro, the marchers headed to La Paz where they joined with thousands of workers, peasants, students and residents of poor neighborhoods in the midst of a general strike which brought the country to a halt. Radio stations broadcast the position of the residents of El Alto: "anyone who engages in dialogue is betraying, the moment to take power has arrived" (*Pulso*, 17 October). With a heavy presence of workers and Aymara Indian peasants, El Alto was the epicenter of the uprising. According to journalists' reports, the Federation of Neighborhood Committees (FEJUVE) pointed to the need to set up

self-defense groups against the onslaught of repression.

In the face of this increasing radicalization, the American consul David Greenlee issued his verdict: "The time has come to turn the page." The new "leader" appointed a "non-political" cabinet filled with technocrats, people of "spotless" reputation. In reality, this cabinet without politicians is a façade to hide the decisive power which is in the hands of the military. The military and police high command has not been touched. The minister of defense is a general, and the minister of agriculture is one of the big soy exporters. The commitments to the IMF are to be carried out to the letter. Congress remains in the hands of the coalition of Sánchez de Lozada. The new government is precisely "Gonism without Goni."

*This ruling-class Operation Rescue is having success for the moment due to the absence of a revolutionary leadership and the betrayal of the reformist and nationalist leaders who still remain at the head of the mass organizations of the working people.*

The maneuver by the domestic bourgeoisie and imperialism received *the backing of the "opposition" parties.* In the first instance, this means the MAS, headed by Evo Morales, leader of the coca-growing peasants, and the Pachacuti Indian Movement (MIP) headed by his rival in the peasant movement, Felipe Quispe. Morales declared: "We will give a breathing space to President Carlos Mesa, a truce, so that he can organize and carry out his promises to the country." Quispe, who is known as "El Mallku," said, "We will be vigilant so that the necessary economic and political changes can be carried out," and he even joined Mesa during a peasant demonstration in La Paz on October 20.

It was the same story with the workers leaders. Following the departure of "Goni" and with his vice president now installed in the presidential palace (the Palacio Quemado), *the union leaders gave him their support:* "We have indicated that Mesa will have our backing as long as he energetically fights corruption," said the executive secretary of the COB, Jaime Solares, following a personal visit with Mesa on Saturday, October 18. This will allow Sánchez de Lozada's deputy to continue in power simply by carrying out a minimal "investigation" of the millions that "Goni" and his defense minister, Carlos Sánchez Berzain, carried off with them. But Solares didn't simply give after-the-fact support to a fait accompli. Even before Congress opened its session and Mesa assumed the presidency, Mesa called Solares to ask for "guarantees," and the head of the COB gave them.

The sell-out leaders admit it themselves. According to an article in *Econoticias Bolivia* (19 October) on the COB Expanded National Plenum held the previous day, "they drew one main conclusion: the workers, peasants, oppressed nations and impoverished middle classes did not rip power from the hands of the 'ruling class' because they still 'don't have' a 'revolutionary party'." In the meeting, COB leader Solares recognized that "no leader and no political party led this popular uprising.... This struggle, unfortunately, did not have a unified leadership. The Bolivian workers, from below, were the ones who kicked the murderer 'Goni' out of power."

Miners' leader Miguel Zuvietta admitted, "No union and no



## With the Miners on the Road to La Paz

**"The most important point is that there is no revolutionary party"**

*The following is the account of a university student from Oruro, historic center of Bolivia's mining region, who participated in one of the marches to La Paz.*

We left on a march from Oruro to the city of La Paz. The pro-government forces had put out a series of lies, and they brought their people out to say a lot of things against us. They even had members of the MNR [the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, party of then-president Sánchez de Lozada], who made a show of crying and saying, "Don't go on the march, kids." Despite all of this, we university students went to La Paz.

Marching on the highway to La Paz, we went through Patacamaya. There were miners from the Huanuni and Colquiri cooperative mines, as well as members of the retail vendors' organizations. There were more than five thousand. The day before, the military used a plane to strafe the miners. People were having a wake for three dead miners there. At Patacamaya there were soldiers blocking the miners from continuing on to La Paz. We arrived, there were a thousand or more students from Oruro and we arrived in the afternoon. We were told there were soldiers there and that we could not continue on the road. The next day they let us through, as we saw there were not a lot of them and it would be possible to get past them. From Patacamaya to La Paz we did not encounter any more obstacles. We arrived in La Paz on Friday [October 17], when Sánchez de Lozada had already resigned. A 'mobilization committee' met us there.

In various places people have chanted 'Workers to power.' Even at the most recent assembly of the Oruro COD [the regional labor body affiliated to the COB labor federation], people were yelling the slogan "Workers to power." But if no clear answer is being given, I think it can all go the wrong way because the bureaucracy and its cliques use two-faced language. There were in this move-



**Confrontation between marchers and the army in Patacamaya, October 16.**

ment, but only to weaken it.

In La Paz there were people who did not agree with Carlos Mesa taking over, and who said that things could have gone much further. People in El Alto were quite radical when they received the university students and other sectors, more radical than in La Paz, in fact. So we were met with vivas and chants of 'Death to Goni.' All along the road, it was striking to see the solidarity shown by the peasants, by people who are very poor.

People will realize that Carlos Mesa represents sectors of the ruling class and that he will not satisfy the demands that have been raised. But if a clear position is not put forward, the opportunists may wind up stronger. The Stalinists, for example, have played a very treacherous role regarding this movement, trying to put the lid on. The most important point is that there is no real leadership, there is no revolutionary party."

left party imagined the magnitude of the conflict that was approaching.... The massacre of El Alto (October 12) was the detonator that set off the war against the government and imperialism. From that point on, the conflict got out of our hands. It was uncontrollable." So finding that they could not control or contain the explosion of fury by the working masses, the leaders decided to call off the indefinite general strike, take down the highway blockades and give Mesa a deadline of 90 days. The leader of the Oruro Departmental Labor Federation (COD), David Rojas, spoke of "waiting for the results of the new president's administration" (*La Patria* [Oruro], 19 October).

For its part, the Bolivian "Communist" Party, which has carried out a thousand Stalinist betrayals, calls on Mesa to adopt an emergency plan, warning that its absence "is a threat to the stability of the new government," which is being "questioned by ultra-leftist and radical sectors who irresponsibly believe that the moment has arrived for revolutionary change" (PCB communiqué, 22 October).

One of the most popular leaders, who enjoys almost unani-

mous support on the "left," is Roberto de la Cruz of the El Alto COR, the union body whose militancy reflects the presence in the city of many ex-miners who were "resettled" due to the closure of the state-owned mines by the hated Decree 21060. Following Sánchez de Lozada's flight, De la Cruz announced: "This is the triumph of the poor, of the workers and of the peasants." During the October 18 rally in the Plaza San Francisco, the El Alto workers leader called on the working people "to solemnly swear not to betray the Bolivian social movement and to unstintingly fight until the poor come to power," as *El Diario* (19 October) reported. Yet the leaders, including De la Cruz, had already sold out the struggle of the working people. "For his part," the paper reported, "the executive secretary of the Central Obrera Regional of El Alto, Roberto de la Cruz, said that he would grant the new head of state some time so that he can organize his cabinet and get negotiations going again on labor's demands."

De la Cruz later hardened his rhetoric against the Mesa government, although he directed his attacks mainly at Mesa's ministers and advisers. At the same time, he has been pushing

anti-Chilean poison, reflecting the worst aspects of bourgeois nationalism, which has characterized above all the discourse of the MAS during the "gas war." Thus the leader of the El Alto COR says of the new president that "we know he is surrounded by a pro-Chilean clique."

After the El Alto massacre, the COR put out a "Message of Instructions to the Courageous Fighters of the City of El Alto, who resist the Sánchez de Lozada government that toadies to imperialism," under the title: "We Will Not Stop Until We Bring Down the Murderous Fascist Government." But in spite of the bombastic language, it ends up calling on the city council members of El Alto, governed by the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement, which originated as a "moderate" left party and later allied itself with the dictator Hugo Banzer), to "identify with the popular movement of the working people," and calls on the "police intelligence services to protect the interests of the people of Bolivia."

*Calling on the police butchers to defend "the interests of the people" is sowing suicidal illusions.* Many left groups have encouraged illusions in the role of the police in Bolivia, both last February and today. But showing a white flag and letting demonstrators through is hardly the same as going over to the insurrectionary masses, as the opportunists pretend. The police are professionals of repression, specializing in attacks on the workers. In the case of the army, we have called for the formation of councils of the worker and peasant conscript soldiers against their bourgeois officers. In contrast to the pseudo-leftists, revolutionaries tell the truth, that the police and military officialdom are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie, the backbone of the capitalist state.

The claim by the union, peasant and "opposition" party leaders that they are only making a tactical retreat is *false*. At the crucial movement they supported the bourgeoisie's substitute team. They openly proclaim their *class collaboration* with Goni's man, who has rightly been called a "*cachorro de la burguesía*" (running dog of the bourgeoisie) and who represents the same policies and the same capitalist class. After proclaiming they didn't want the same regime "in new skirts," that is exactly what they are backing. *It is not for this that some 140 workers and peasants gave their lives, it is not for this that more than 500 working people, youth and residents of poor neighborhoods were wounded!*

### **Down with "Democratizing" Counterrevolution – Workers to Power!**

One of the most notable aspects of recent days has been the effort by the Bolivian bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters to channel the masses' anger into a phony "democratic" way out of the crisis. In this, they have been able to count on the aid of almost the entire spectrum of the opportunist left, from the "opposition" benches in parliament to the supposed far left, including those who proclaim themselves Trotskyists.

For some time now, Evo Morales' MAS has been urging the calling of a constituent assembly to "refound the country" with a new constitution. Tailing after it are several left organizations, including the small Liga Obrera Revolucionaria – Cuarta

Internacional, affiliated with the Fracción Trotskista headed by the Argentine PTS (Socialist Workers Party). The LOR-CI's programmatic calling card has been the demand for a constituent assembly, to which they tack on the adjective "revolutionary." But there is nothing revolutionary about this policy, and it is grossly tailist. In a supplement to their paper *Lucha Obrera* (29 September) they write: "The MAS and Evo Morales have spoken on several occasions of a Constituent Assembly. Now is the time to go from words to deeds and to raise this as part of their action program, because now is when it is necessary to fight to impose this!" In this way, just like the openly reformist outfits, the LOR-CI *presents the issue as if it were basically a democratic question*.

Now the new president Carlos Mesa has taken up the demand for a constituent assembly. In his inaugural address as president, he promised to "refound" the country by calling a constituent assembly. In this he can count on the enthusiastic support of the World Bank, no less. This cartel of blood-sucking imperialist bankers declared: "In order to protect investments, social peace is necessary; obviously we think that the dialogue that will take place in conjunction with the referendum [on the sale of gas] and the constituent assembly will help" (Bolpress, 22 October). As we wrote concerning the constituent assembly in our article, "Bolivia Aflame: Gas War on the Altiplano, Workers to Power!" (14 October), "In the mouths of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians, this slogan is a means of preventing the struggle from escaping the bounds of capitalist 'democracy'; coming from leftist groups, it is a policy intended to evade the need to really fight for workers revolution, a kind of 'minimum program'."

Jaime Solares and other COB leaders brandish the threat that if the Mesa government doesn't deliver the goods to their satisfaction, they could call a "People's Assembly." Since 1971, when the Asamblea Popular was established in the shadow of General Juan José Torres, reestablishing this body has been the great dream of the main pseudo-Trotskyist organization in Bolivia, Guillermo Lora's Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR – Revolutionary Workers Party). In reality, that assembly tied the workers to bourgeois sectors and its incapacity to organize resistance to General Banzer's coup was followed by the formation of a popular front in exile with the very same General Torres.

Neither a Constituent Assembly nor a People's Assembly, but the Bolshevik program of power to the workers, peasants and soldiers councils, like the soviets which took power in the Russian Revolution of October 1917: this must be the program of genuine revolutionaries in Bolivia today. In the months leading up to the October Revolution, the opportunist parties told the peasants that a "constituent assembly" would grant them land and would put an end to the imperialist war. The Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky urged them to seize the land with their own hands. To the workers and soldiers they said that they, together with their peasant brothers, should take all the power, extending the revolution to neighboring countries and to the powerful proletariat of the imperialist countries.

In Bolivia, ever since colonial times the indigenous peoples



Miners leaving La Paz pass through El Alto, October 18.

have been subjected to brutal oppression and exclusion. In this country, where since the rebellion of Túpac Katari in 1781 the bourgeoisie has lived in fear of the spectre of an Indian siege of La Paz, we call to fight for a *worker-peasant-Indian government*, that would be the dictatorship of the proletariat against the dictatorship of capital. We emphasize that the foundation of the revolutionary program is proletarian internationalism, which is the opposite of the anti-Chilean nationalism which only places obstacles in the way of the necessary unity with the workers of Chile, Peru and all of Latin America. A workers revolution in Bolivia would have to be extended to the entire region, seeking to form an *Andean federation of workers republics*, as part of a *Socialist United States of Latin America*. It is crucial that it extend as well to the proletariat of the United States in a struggle that would defeat imperialism and all of its "running dogs" in the semi-colonies once and for all.

Despite the "truce" decreed by the tops, in the ranks the struggle continues. The peasants have seized the lands of the Sánchez de Lozada family. The slogan has been raised to occupy "Goni's" mines, and that the miners themselves should impose the expropriation of all the mines and workers control of production. In the Chapare region, repression continues against peasants who are demanding freedom to cultivate and sell coca and who oppose imperialist programs for eradicating the crops. It has been reported that when the Bolivian president visited the White House a year ago, he told President Bush that if he continued this eradication program, "I may be back here in a year, this time seeking political asylum" (*New York Times*, 23 October). And that turned out to be true.

We defend the struggle of the coca-growing peasants in Bolivia, where the use of the coca leaf has been traditional since time immemorial. We stress that in order to break the stranglehold of Yankee imperialism it is necessary to confront the "war on drugs" unleashed by Washington. In reality, this is a war against the oppressed masses of Latin America and against the black ghettos and Latino barrios in the United States. Marxists oppose the outlawing or penalization of drugs

(just as we also oppose laws against alcohol).

In the course of the mobilizations, many undeniably important demands have been raised, including the call for repeal of Decree 21060 and the Oil and Gas Law; for imperialist troops and advisors out; for a living minimum wage with a cost-of-living escalator to compensate for inflation; for immediate cancellation of all arrest warrants, and for other demands as well. In order to fight for these demands, it is fundamental to put forward a strategy and perspective of *permanent revolution*, for consistent class struggle capable of wrenching the urgent needs of the working masses from the grip of the ruling class.

At every decisive turn of the class struggle, *the sellout leaders have turned power over to the bourgeoisie*. This was the case in April 1952, when Juan Lechín and his followers handed power on a platter to Víctor Paz Estenssoro and

Hernán Siles Zuazo of the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement). This was the case in 1970-71, when the Comando Político of the COB acted as an adjutant for General Torres. This was what happened in 1982 when the military dictatorship fell and a bourgeois popular front of Siles Zuazo, Jaime Paz Zamora and the PCB was brought in. That government paved the way for the return of MNR chief Paz Estenssoro so that he could close the mines and throw thousands of miners out of their jobs. And so it is today, when Solares and the COB hand power to Mesa, with the approval of the MAS, the MIP and the rest of the "opposition" parties.

It is necessary to draw the political lessons from this history in order to use them in forging the nucleus of a new leadership that measures up to the enormous heroism and will to struggle of the Bolivian workers. "When you have problems, just call us," said a miner from Huanuni as he left La Paz (*El Potosí*, 19 October). Other miners were more explicit: "If you have to overthrow, give us a call." It is necessary to prepare the definitive overthrow not just of another bourgeois politician, nor just the "neo-liberal model," but of the capitalist system of exploitation and death. As Leon Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.... The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable.... The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion, only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet."

This must be the program of a future Trotskyist Bolshevik party in Bolivia. ■



## Bolivia Aflame...

*continued from page 72*

peasant, Indian and union organizations distort this reality with narrow nationalist rhetoric. They denounce Chile and Peru, as if they wanted to re-ignite the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). No! The struggle must be directed against Yankee imperialism, and its local bourgeois lackeys, which after invading Afghanistan and Iraq is now trying to impose colonial subjugation on these countries. It is clear to all that a decisive clash is coming, and in that hard combat against a powerful enemy, what's needed is unity with the Chilean, Peruvian and North American working people.

Bolivian workers have once again demonstrated the heroism that has characterized so many moments of their history. But despite their enormous militancy, the key element is still missing: a revolutionary internationalist leadership with the class program and determination needed not only to overthrow the hated "Goni" (Sánchez de Lozada) but to sweep away the entire bourgeoisie and its repressive apparatus, through *socialist revolution* that spreads internationally. The task of the hour is to fight all those forces which try to divert this struggle in a "democratizing" direction, into nationalism and class collaboration. *It is urgently necessary to show a revolutionary class road: through elected strike committees, made up of delegates who can be recalled by the ranks at any moment, as well as workers self-defense committees and groups. Neither Vice President Carlos Mesa nor any kind of bourgeois "constituent assembly" are what's called for, but rather revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers councils along the road to a workers, peasants and Indians government. It is necessary to give flesh and blood to the slogan, "Workers to power." In order to do so, what's required is to form the nucleus of a genuinely revolutionary party, a Bolshevik-Trotskyist party.*

For several years now there have been repeated struggles in Bolivia over "globalization" and "neo-liberalism." In April 2000 there was the "water war" in Cochabamba against privatization of the life-sustaining liquid by the Aguas del Tunari company, controlled by the U.S. "multinational" corporation Bechtel. On that occasion, six people were killed, and even though the dictator Hugo Bánzer decreed a state of siege, the struggle culminated in the takeover of the city by its inhabitants and cancellation of the contract. Despite its defeat in the "water war," Bechtel, one of the richest companies in the world, sued Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in the world, for US\$25 million in the California courts. Now it's back on the attack with the "gas war." The Pacific LNG consortium which is organizing the mega-project to export Bolivian gas (valued at US\$7 billion) is composed of Bechtel, Amoco, British Petro-

leum and Repsol-YPF – U.S., British and Spanish companies, that is, from the same imperialist powers that just invaded Iraq. The gas is intended to resolve the electricity crisis in California, whose new "governator" Arnold Schwarzenegger is reputed to be tied to the energy cartel.

From the time of the "*Rosca*" (ring), the narrow clique of tin barons who dominated Bolivia up to the 1950s, to the "revolutionary" nationalist regime of Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who began the first of three presidential terms in 1952, to the series of military dictators of the '70s and '80s and the "nego-



Rodrigo Abd/AP

**Police fire on demonstrators in La Paz, October 16.**

tiated democracy" of the '90s, the bourgeoisie has maintained the yoke of capitalist exploitation. The particular individuals and political regime of the moment are secondary matters. It's not just a question of a neo-liberal "model" or a globalized economy. The Bolivian masses are suffering under the yoke of capitalism and imperialism, and the solution cannot be limited to canceling a contract or the fall of the current president: what is necessary is workers revolution.

During his first presidential term, from 1993 to 1997, Sánchez de Lozada carried out to the letter the privatization plan which he began in 1985 as the planning minister during the third presidency of Paz Estenssoro, his fellow leader of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR). They stripped the Bolivian Mining Corporation (Comibol) of its assets by means of the notorious Decree 21060. With the "decentralization" of Comibol, which they could only ram through under a state of siege, they dismantled the state-owned mines and destroyed the strongest sector of the proletariat, under the disguise of "relocating" the miners. This and the subsequent "capitalization" (i.e., sale to imperialist investors) of several public companies gave "Goni" and his pals of the new *Rosca* the opportunity to enrich themselves through large-scale looting of state properties. When, on top of all this, he tried to raise income taxes at the beginning of 2003, affecting his own base in the middle

Juan Karita/AP



**Peasants in region of Warisata defend themselves against government troops with Mauser rifles left over from 1930s Chaco War.**

class, it was the last straw. There was an explosion of popular anger against the “*impuestazo*” (tax attack).

The blow-up began on February 12 with a mutiny by police upset over the absence of a pay increase in the new budget. Virtually the entire Bolivian left solidarized with the cops, even shouting “long live the uprising of the workers in uniform,” as did a leaflet by Guillermo Lora’s Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR – Revolutionary Workers Party). Others, like the small Liga Obrera Revolucionaria por la Cuarta Internacional (LOR-CI, Revolutionary Workers League for the Fourth International), more timidly raised the call for “a policy that would make support for the mutiny conditional,” at the same time as it declared February 12 and 13 to be “revolutionary days” (*Lucha Obrera*, March 2003). This despite the fact that the working class was only weakly mobilized, and that only on the second day. Notwithstanding the support from the left, whether enthusiastic or conditional, the “days” ended after a day and a half when a 40 percent raise was granted to the police. These professionals in anti-working-class repression were soon back on the job, beating looters and workers alike. It was correct to seek to make use of the breach opened up by the crisis in the armed institutions of the bourgeoisie, but genuine Trotskyists give no support to the action of the police and do not paint as “revolutionary” what was a mutiny with Bonapartist overtones.

Forced to backtrack on the “tax attack,” Sánchez de Lozada returned to the charge with the project for selling off Bolivia’s gas. This provoked a “civic work stoppage” in El Alto on September 15, followed by a national day of mobilization on the 19th, and the call for an unlimited general strike by the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB – Bolivian Labor Federation) along with highway blockades by peasant organizations. However, the COB under miners’ leader Jaime Solares, did not build the strike heavily outside of the capital, the teachers in La Paz decided to go back to their classes after only two days, the

road blockades were limited to the *altiplano* north of La Paz, dominated by the wing of the peasant union (CSUTCB) led by Felipe Quispe (the “Mallku”), who agreed to “dialogue” with the government, and Evo Morales, head of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) and leader of the coca-growing peasants of the Chapare region, was out of the country trying to duck the issue. Thus the action was limited to middle-class sectors and undercut by the feuding among the bureaucratic leaders. But then another blow landed.

The government, in the person of the arrogant defense minister Carlos Sánchez Bersaín, on orders from the haughty American proconsul David Greenlee (former head agent of the CIA in Bolivia during the 1980s), decided to attack the region of Sorata and Warisata, in order to “rescue” tourists who had arrived in the area near

Lake Titicaca. This area was a “sanctuary of Indian education,” where in 1937 the famous Warisata Ayllu School was founded, one of the first rural pedagogical institutes in Latin America to train teachers for bilingual education. The attack was not accidental. President Sánchez de Lozada himself subsequently said that they “study something else and not to become teachers,” while the government minister (in charge of police), Yerko Kukoc, alleged that the professors are “people with radical ideas” who are providing a “very radicalized education” (*Pulso*, 10 October).

According to an account we have received from La Paz:

“It is known that after some ten days in which those tourists were stuck in the region due to the road blockades, the population was furious at the government over its failure to resolve the demands raised. The [defense] minister’s arrival in the area provoked a reaction which in reality was intended to reproach him for his delay. In the face of the crowd, the minister fled back to the city in his helicopter. It was from here that he ordered the organizing of a military caravan to accompany the buses carrying the tourists and others. Before arriving at Warisata, the army tried to clear the road blocked by the peasants and began shooting with impunity. Seven people died, among them an eight-year-old girl. That was the spark.”

The media transmitted the photo of an Aymara Indian mother, carrying her *wawa* (child) on her back, with an antiquated Mauser rifle from the time of the Chaco War (in the 1930s) to defend herself from the troops.

### The Massacre of El Alto

This government provocation was followed by another one, the election of the “people’s defender” (a kind of ombudsman empowered to investigate human rights cases), when the parliament imposed the candidate picked by the president. Meanwhile, an indefinite work stoppage was decreed in El Alto beginning October 8 (the anniversary of “Che” Guevara’s

assassination by the Bolivian army and the CIA), which had the effect of blocking supplies from reaching La Paz. Although it was called by the Federation of Neighborhood Committees (FEJUVE), it was dominated by El Alto's combative Regional Labor Confederation (COR) with heavy participation of students from the Public University of El Alto (UPEA). The next day, Thursday October 9th, a contingent of hundreds of mine workers from Huanuni arrived at Ventilla, a district in El Alto, to support the struggle. Then the serial massacre began. The military fired their weapons, killing the miner José Luis Atahuichi Ramos and the worker-student Ramiro Vargas Astilla. There followed clashes in several of the districts in El Alto, including Río Seco, Villa Adela, Tunari, Alto Lima and above all Santiago II, where many laid-off ("relocated") miners live. But the trucks were unable to get past the pickets.

The Massacre of El Alto reached its high point on Sunday the 12th, when the government tried to break the blockade around the capital. Beginning in the early morning hours, the army undertook an operation to transport 12 tank trucks from the storage plant at Senkata. The account from La Paz continues:

"On Saturday throughout the day, we were listening to Radio Pachamama, a station in El Alto, which was the only one that could move around with a degree of security in the conflict because it is known as the *alteños'* radio. The accounts were terrifying. Dead people here, dead people there. The young reporters got around on foot or on bicycles. The highway linking the city of La Paz with El Alto was another battlefield. One of the most critical moments occurred in the following circumstances: a hail of bullets dispersed the blockaders for a moment. The army used that moment to bring out a couple of tankers with gasoline and attempted to take them to La Paz. There were bloody clashes all along the way, which according to the government aimed at relieving the suffering of the people of La Paz, in the basin, who needed gasoline.... It was horrific. The paradox is that it was then that the population of La Paz began to become politicized. The tragedy continued all day and continued on Sunday, Monday....

From the Senkata plant to the center of La Paz is a distance of about 20 kilometers. That day some 31 civilians were murdered by the "forces of order," more than one per kilometer. With 95 wounded, the hospitals of El Alto were overflowing. Such is the price in human lives this vampire government is willing to charge in order to keep afloat in the "gas war."

"So far, 57 have died from gunshots. From Sunday on, the movement has continued to move down the hillsides into the city of La Paz. The mobilization has extended to the rest of the country. Two dead in Santa Cruz. Two dead in Cochabamba. General strike in Sucre, the same in Potosí. The Huanuni miners have decided to seize the mines



Dado Galderisi/AP

**Start of the El Alto massacre: Bolivian army troops raid Venilla district of El Alto, October 9. In following days more than 60 were killed.**

owned by Sánchez de Lozada. The university students are mobilized.

"On Monday night, Sánchez de Lozada issued a decree announcing that the decision on the gas exports would be made in December, after consulting the people. It was another slap in the face. After so many deaths, people expected that at least the defense minister would resign, together with the head of the cabinet (minister of government), or that the city would be demilitarized. Nothing of the sort. Immediately, at an early hour, the vice president gave a press conference. He announced that he was distancing himself from Sánchez de Lozada, without resigning the vice-presidency."

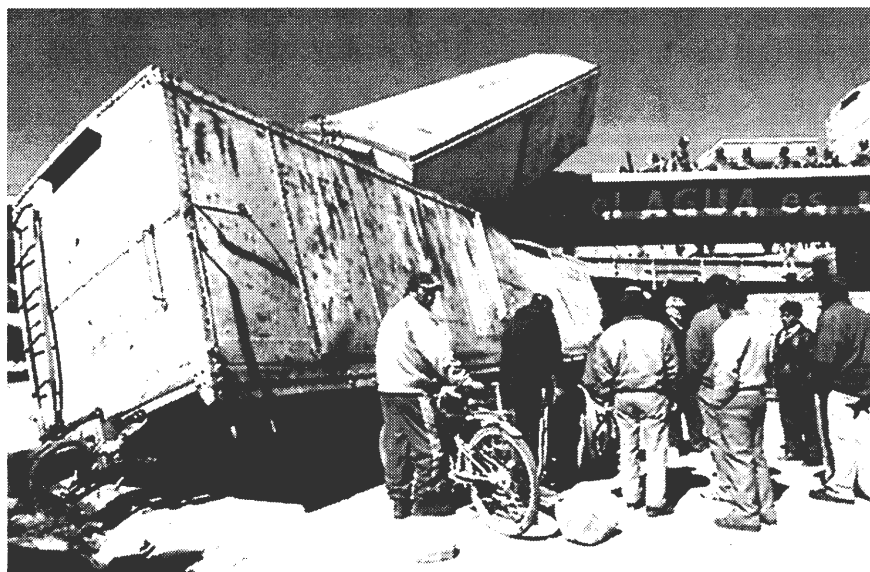
The ministers from the New Republican Force (NFR), a right-wing populist party, announced their withdrawal from the cabinet. However, the U.S. embassy put out a communiqué supporting Sánchez de Lozada. Jaime Paz Zamora of the "Revolutionary Left Movement" (MIR) immediately announced his support for the president, and was soon followed by Manfred Reyes Villa of the NFR. In a sign of the mass fury, Paz Zamora's home was set on fire, as was the NFR party headquarters. "Everything indicates that the U.S. policy is in full swing: harden things up, and kill."

### **The Fight for a Bolshevik Trotskyist Party in Bolivia**

In earlier confrontations, both in April 2000 and in February of this year, the opposition to the government was dominated by outfits of a popular-frontist character. They embodied or sought a class-collaborationist alliance with bourgeois sectors – a "popular front" such as in France or during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, or Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile at the beginning of the 1970s. (In 2000, it was the Cochabamba Water Coordinating Committee, in February 2003 there was the People's Committee.) Currently, the pro-capitalist union tops and petty-bourgeois peasant leaders do



Juan Karita/AP



**Cargo train pushed by demonstrators from rail bridge between El Alto and La Paz to block the highway below, October 15.**

not have solid control of the conflict, which is increasingly dominated by open combat between the working class and the capitalist class. "Workers to power!" chant the working people of El Alto as they carry the caskets of their martyrs. They are taking up the slogan that 12,000 miners raised two decades ago when they occupied La Paz against the popular front government of Hernán Siles Zuazo, whose attacks on the mining proletariat set the stage for the infamous Decree 21060.

Facing the danger that the crisis could get out of hand, the union misleaders are anxiously seeking a deal with imperialism. Up until a couple of days ago, they only asked that Sánchez de Lozada cancel the gas sale. After last weekend's massacre, this is no longer enough to calm the masses. So Evo Morales of the MAS is now calling for the president to resign and for vice president Carlos Mesa to take the reins of power, and that a "constituent assembly" be called to "refound the country." This demand was also raised a year ago by a popular-front political lash-up in opposition to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA, or ALCA in Spanish) including the MIR, the NFR, the Socialist Party and the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement led by Felipe Quispe. At the same time, the call for a constituent assembly (dressed up with the adjective "revolutionary") is the axis of the political platform of the LORCI, who inherited it from Nahuel Moreno, the Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist who died in 1987. In the mouths of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians, this slogan is a means of preventing the struggle from escaping the bounds of capitalist "democracy"; coming from leftist groups, it is a policy intended to evade the need to really fight for workers revolution, a kind of "minimum program."

In the current Bolivian context, where there is already the threadbare bourgeois "democracy" typical of semicolonial countries, with its spider's web of electoral fraud, the demand for a constituent assembly (whether or not it is dubbed "revolutionary") has nothing revolutionary about it. This democra-

tizing slogan dissolves the proletariat into the "citizenry," diluting the class struggle into a "democratic" soup, and points to an electoralist "way out" of the crisis. It is not for this that so many have given their lives. For its part, Guillermo Lora's POR is calling for a new version of the Asamblea Popular (People's Assembly) of 1971, a body which was not formed by electing delegates who could be recalled by the worker and peasant ranks, but rather by deals between the reformist and bourgeois leaders. In reality, it served to tie the working people to the bourgeois government of General Juan José Torres. It is no accident that the Asamblea Popular of 1971 did nothing to prepare the masses to resist the bloody "coup foretold" of General Hugo Bánzer, nor that the assembly's "continuation" (as Lora always calls it), the "Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front," was a class-collaborationist

popular front with Torres, sectors of the MNR and other bourgeois elements.

The central demands of a revolutionary vanguard in Bolivia today must point the way to root out all capitalist exploitation and oppression through a proletarian revolution that establishes a workers and peasants government. Among the radicalized rank and file, some are already talking of the need to take power. The League for the Fourth International calls to form *strike committees, with elected delegates*, recallable at any time; for *factory, mine and plant committees*; and for expanding these bodies into *workers, peasants and soldiers councils*, like the "soviets" during the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. Instead of the fraudulent electoral "representative democracy" of the bourgeois state, these committees will serve as organs of direct workers democracy to organize the revolutionary struggle, and later they can lay the basis for a workers state. Instead of distorting and putting obstacles in the way of the working masses with the bourgeois electoral machinery, which allows the "electorate" to periodically vote on who will exploit them for the following period, soviet democracy serves as a transmission belt permitting the combative will of the masses to express itself, overcoming the bureaucratic impediments in the unions.

The miners' dynamite is a symbol of their militancy, and has been a rather effective means of blocking roads. Yet it is far from sufficient to defend the masses against the white terror unleashed by the bourgeois government. It is necessary to form *workers defense groups and committees*, pointing toward the formation of *workers and peasants militias*. Beginning from a proletarian nucleus, these can bring in peasants and the growing number of soldiers who want to "turn their cap around" and join the workers in revolt. All this must lead to a struggle for a *workers-peasant-Indian government*, the dictatorship of the proletariat which would overthrow the bloody dictatorship of capital and open the way for the real

## Fists of Anger Are Raised: “¡Goni Asesino!” (Gustavo Sánchez de Lozada Is a Murderer)

We print below excerpts from e-mail messages, written at different times on October 14, which have reached us from the Bolivian capital, La Paz.

The factor generalizing the conflict – which we were not able to find for 15 years – has been given to us by the government itself: Sánchez de Lozada must go! One gets the feeling that history took this necessary turn to avenge itself. Last night hundreds of mine workers arrived in the city. Together with them, the *gremialistas* (street and market vendors, who are organized in unions) have taken to the streets. Southern La Paz is also mobilized: from the hillsides where the domestic employees live, the dairy maids, the carpenters, the mechanics ....

Right now a march of mourners, carrying Bolivian flags with black ribbons, with *wiphalas* (the multi-colored flag of the indigenous movement), yelling with rage, is coming down from El Alto along United Nations Avenue. The number of dead is 43 now, and I do not want to keep counting. I feel that contradictory emotion, of admiration and pain, which the strength of the people, and their dead, causes in me. Mass meetings are being held in the neighborhoods. The radio is broadcasting a huge meeting in the San Miguel church, where even the proper residents of that [well-to-do] area are calling the peasants brothers who are arriving there from Ovejuyo, Chasqui Pampa and the area of the Illimani valleys ....

The process evolved toward becoming politicized in an exceptional manner. At this moment, the indigenous and peasant movement is almost secondary. By moving to the cities, it met up with the poor neighborhoods where the unemployed live. Obviously, these sectors are more politically aware. To this must be added the historic heroism of the people of La Paz, whose memories have accumulated so many insurrections. The movement is spontaneous. It is being led intuitively by the neighborhood leaders. Their objective: the head of Sánchez de Lozada. It doesn't go beyond that ....

The forces have built up over these 15 years. In February, a spark was lit, but it was still a lumpenproletarian spark, with confusion thrown in by the police mutineers, not to be trusted. Today things have changed. The spark is political, though still with all the inconsistencies which are



Women protesters in La Paz, October 17.

part of the movement, with its ambiguities and lack of precision. I don't think this is the preamble to the seizure of power, because there is no political leadership which goes beyond ousting the current government. A final showdown is still pending. I fear that Sánchez de Lozada has made some private deals that he has to attend to, and for that reason he holds onto power in such an obsessive way, pressured by the multinationals and the U.S. embassy....

A silence of the grave has settled over the city of La Paz. The moral condemnation to which it bears witness has the government bottled up in the presidential residence of San Jorge. Sporadically, church bells peal, the sound mixing with that of a stick of dynamite going off on the hillsides. The funerals have begun. Women dressed in black, their heads covered with heavy cloth, are groaning. “Who is going to help me? What's to become of my *wawas* (kids)?” And the caskets keep coming. People are stunned, filled with pain and anger. “¡Goni asesino!” (Sánchez de Lozada is a murderer). The fists of outrage are raised. Dozens of Indian youths have been killed. The wakes are held on the ground itself, in the midst of the poverty that permeates each and every day. A few small candles accompany the bloodied bodies.

The paving stones have been dug up from the streets to form barricades. We are all waiting to hear Sánchez de Lozada's last word. Until that time the waiting will be filled with tension.

Sebastian Hachner/Indymedia Bolivia)

liberation of the oppressed masses by expropriating the bourgeoisie, passing over from democratic tasks to socialist tasks. The struggle for *workers revolution* against imperialism and the “national” bourgeoisie must be international, extending throughout the region in an *Andean federation of workers republics* and a *Socialist United States of Latin America*. In all of this, the essential element is to forge a Trotskyist Bolshevik party.

A genuine Trotskyist party would combat the bourgeois nationalist poison that counterposes the Bolivian working people to their Chilean and Peruvian class brothers and sisters. Trotskyist internationalism is the contrary of the old nationalist verbiage of Lora's POR about reclaim-

ing the “outlet to the sea,” and the silence of groups which don't even mention the anti-Chilean attacks of the leaders. A policy of proletarian internationalism must be made concrete in action. Currently, a real vanguard party in Bolivia would fight to join forces with the Chilean workers, who just carried out their first general strike in many years, with the Peruvian workers who waged a hard-fought teachers strike against the Toledo government, and with the workers and indigenous peoples of Ecuador in the face of the attacks of the former coup-plotting colonel, now president, Lucio Gutiérrez, who was elected with the votes of the left (see our pamphlet, *Ecuador: Hervidero al borde del estallido* [Ecuador: Cauldron at the Boiling Point], July 2003,

which is also available on the Internet).

Beyond South America, the fate of the Bolivian working people is intimately bound up with the class struggle on a world scale. In order to strike a blow at the imperialist masters, it is vital to fight for the *defeat of the colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan*. It is necessary to *defend Cuba* against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, workers in the United States and throughout the world must express proletarian solidarity with the Bolivian masses concretely, *blocking the transport of arms to the murderous regime by "hot-cargoing"* (stopping the shipment of this matériel).

Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada has bragged on a number of occasions that he will only be dragged out of the presidential palace dead. Up to now, he enjoys the unrestricted support of his bosses in the White House, expressed in a statement to the OAS (Organization of American States) by Bush's national security advisor Condoleezza Rice. But Yankee imperialism is not exactly loyal to its semicolonial satraps and viceroys when they become inconvenient; just consider the fate of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic (1961), Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam (1963), and Manuel Noriega in Panama (1990). Notwithstanding "Condi's" praises, "Goni" could well end up like late 1940s president Gualberto Villarroel, hung from a lamppost. But for the working class, it is not sufficient to topple the tyrant of the day, it's necessary bring down the whole system of ferocious exploitation which has subjected the country of the *altiplano* to centuries of desperate poverty.

Bolivia has been looted since the times of the *mita* (the forced labor system, taken over by the Spanish colonizers from the Incas), when streams of silver flowed out of the Cerro Rico of Potosí at a cost of unspeakable suffering by the indigenous miners, to be forged into coins by black slaves and provide much of the currency of the Spanish realm. The lords of silver were followed by the tin barons, but the "National Revolution" of 1952, dominated by the bourgeois MNR of Paz Estenssoro and Siles Zuazo, did not destroy, nor could it destroy, the imperialist yoke, because it did not go beyond the bounds of capitalism. The same MNR which was forced to nationalize the mines in 1952 closed most of them in 1985. Today it is represented by the most egregious puppet of Yankee imperialism, the hated "Goni." Yet the opportunist left wants to keep on binding the masses to the framework of bourgeois nationalism. Imperialism will never pull its bloody claws out of the living body of Bolivia and all of Latin America without a proletarian revolution that spreads internationally, above all to the multi-racial and multi-national working class of the United States, thereby destroying the imperialist monster once and for all.

At this moment, when the valiant Bolivian workers are confronting the repressive onslaught of the lackeys of imperialism, the League for the Fourth International calls:

- *Form strike committees – with elected and recall-*

*able delegates – and factory, mine and plant committees! Fight to expand these committees into workers, peasants and soldiers councils!*

- *For the formation of workers defense groups and committees, pointing toward workers and peasants militias!*

- *The working class should seize the oil, mining and gas facilities, imposing their expropriation without compensation and workers control by the ranks of production and distribution!*

- *Fight for a worker-peasant-Indian government, for workers revolution that will expropriate the bourgeoisie, extending to an Andean federation of workers republics and a Socialist United States of Latin America!*

- *For international working-class solidarity with the Bolivian masses – "Hot-cargo" arms shipments to the murderous regime!*

- *U.S. troops and agents out of Bolivia! For the defeat of the colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan!*

- *For the unity of Latin American and North American working people! Sweep away imperialism through international socialist revolution!*

***The task of the hour is to build an authentic Trotskyist party in Bolivia, as an integral part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International!***

## League for the Fourth International

### Internationalist Group/U.S.

**Internationalist Group**, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.  
Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711  
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

**Boston:** write to P.O. Box 381, Boston, MA 02117

### Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

**Brazil:** write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-740, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

**Rio de Janeiro:** write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-974, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

### Groupe Internationaliste

**In France:** write to MBE n° 244, 80, rue Legendre, 75017 Paris, France

### LIV/Deutschland

**Germany:** write to Postfach 74 06 41, 22096 Hamburg, Germany

### Grupo Internacionalista/México

**Mexico:** write to Apdo. Postal 70-379, Admón. de Correos No. 70, CP 04511, México, D.F., Mexico

### VVI/Nederland

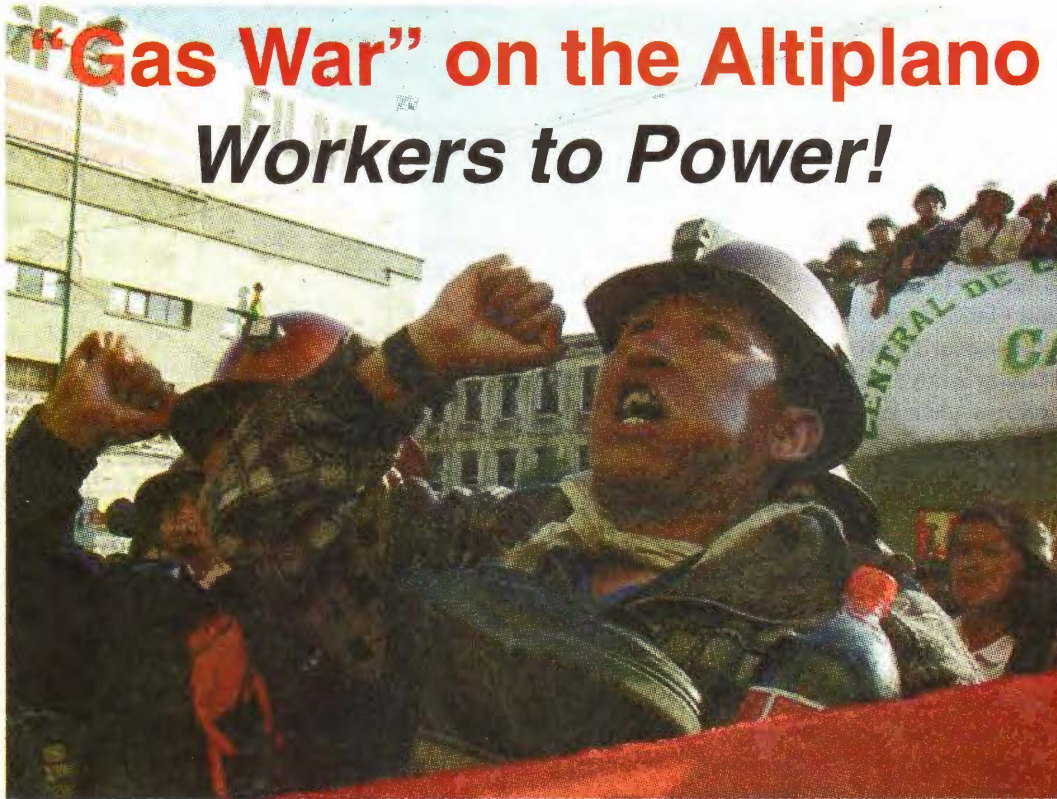
**Netherlands:** write to Postbus 2076, 3000 CB Rotterdam, Netherlands



## Massacre Outside La Paz Touches Off Uprising

### **Bolivia Aflame:**

### **“Gas War” on the Altiplano Workers to Power!**



Sebastian Hacher/Indymedia Bolivia

**Bolivian miners in La Paz, October 17, cheered reports of president's resignation.**

OCTOBER 14 – For the last month, Bolivia has been shaken by massive mobilizations against the government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and his plans to export gas to an imperialist consortium. The confirmed death toll at the hands of the regime's repressive forces is approaching a hundred, and over the last three days more than 60 have been killed. In the massacre carried out on Sunday, October 12 in El Alto – an impoverished city of some 600,000 strategically located at the entrance to the capital of La Paz, with a strong presence of Aymara Indians among its residents – more than 30 civilians were killed. It is now being reported that 15 conscript soldiers were shot by their officers execution-style for refusing to fire on the people. In Bolivia's "gas war," anger is rising as workers' and peasants' blood flows on the *altiplano* (high plateau). Today, columns of workers were descending the slopes which surround the capital, carrying the caskets of their murdered comrades and shouting the slogan, "Workers to power!"

The puppet president, imposed by the U.S. embassy although he received barely 22 percent of the vote, rails against the "danger" of a "union dictatorship," recalling rulers in the past who screamed about the "communist threat." Yet while this is at bottom a battle between the classes, the leaders of the  
*continued on page 66*

**140 Dead – President Flees as Miners Pour into La Paz  
Vice President Takes Over Due to Union Tops' Sellout**

### **Workers Still on Battle Footing**

OCTOBER 26 – After weeks of huge and increasingly combative mobilizations, on October 17 Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada fled the country, leaving his vice president Carlos Mesa in power. In order to please his masters in Washington, the murderous president left a toll 140 dead and some 500 injured. The miners were decisive in forcing the flight of Sánchez de Lozada. Yet by granting a "truce" to the new president the leaders of the workers, peasants and Indian organizations betrayed the workers who fought so heroically against the puppet regime in the "gas war."

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